Junji Ito

Original novel
by Osamu Dazai

NO LONGER HUMAN

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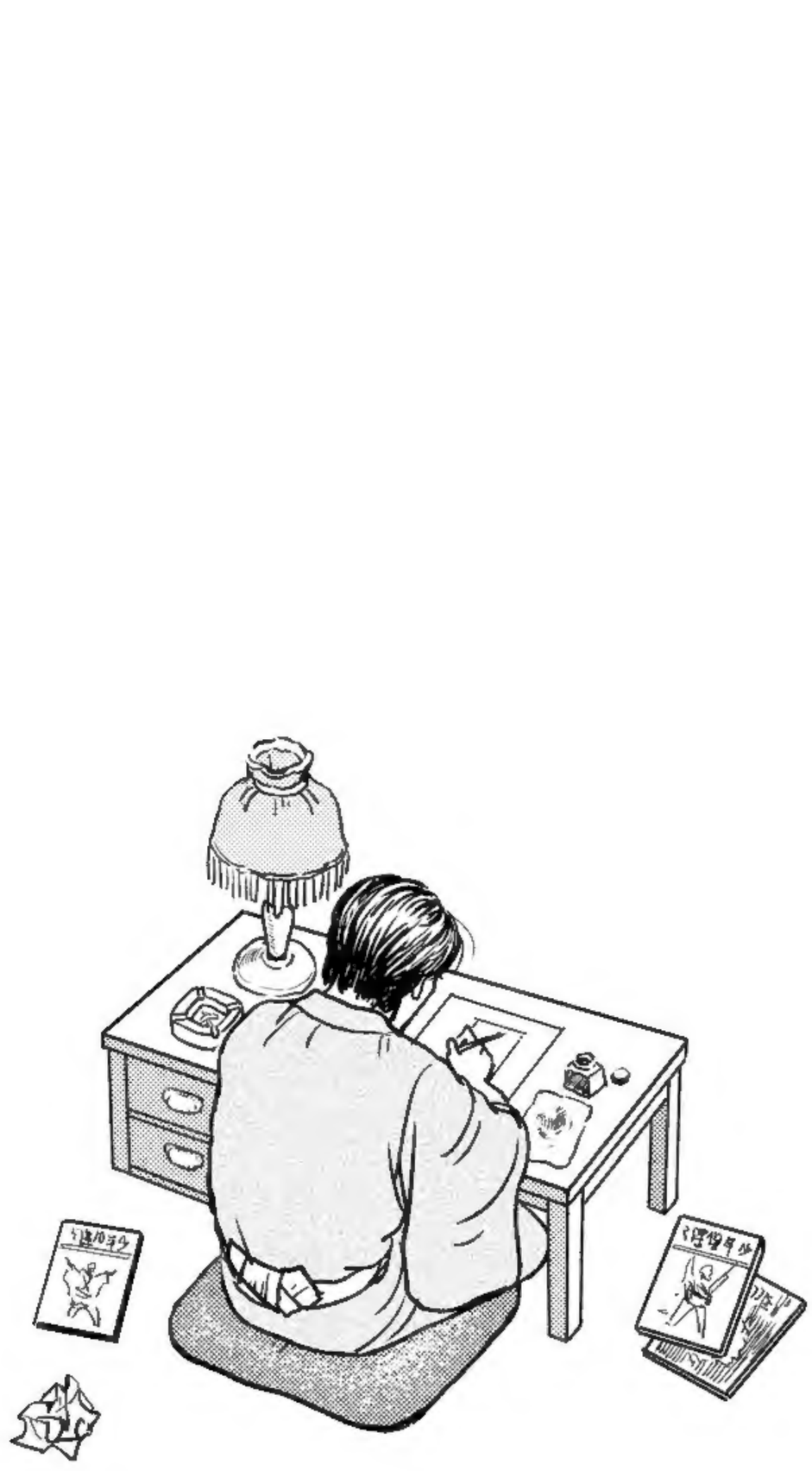
Based on English translation by Donald Keene

VIZ MEDIA



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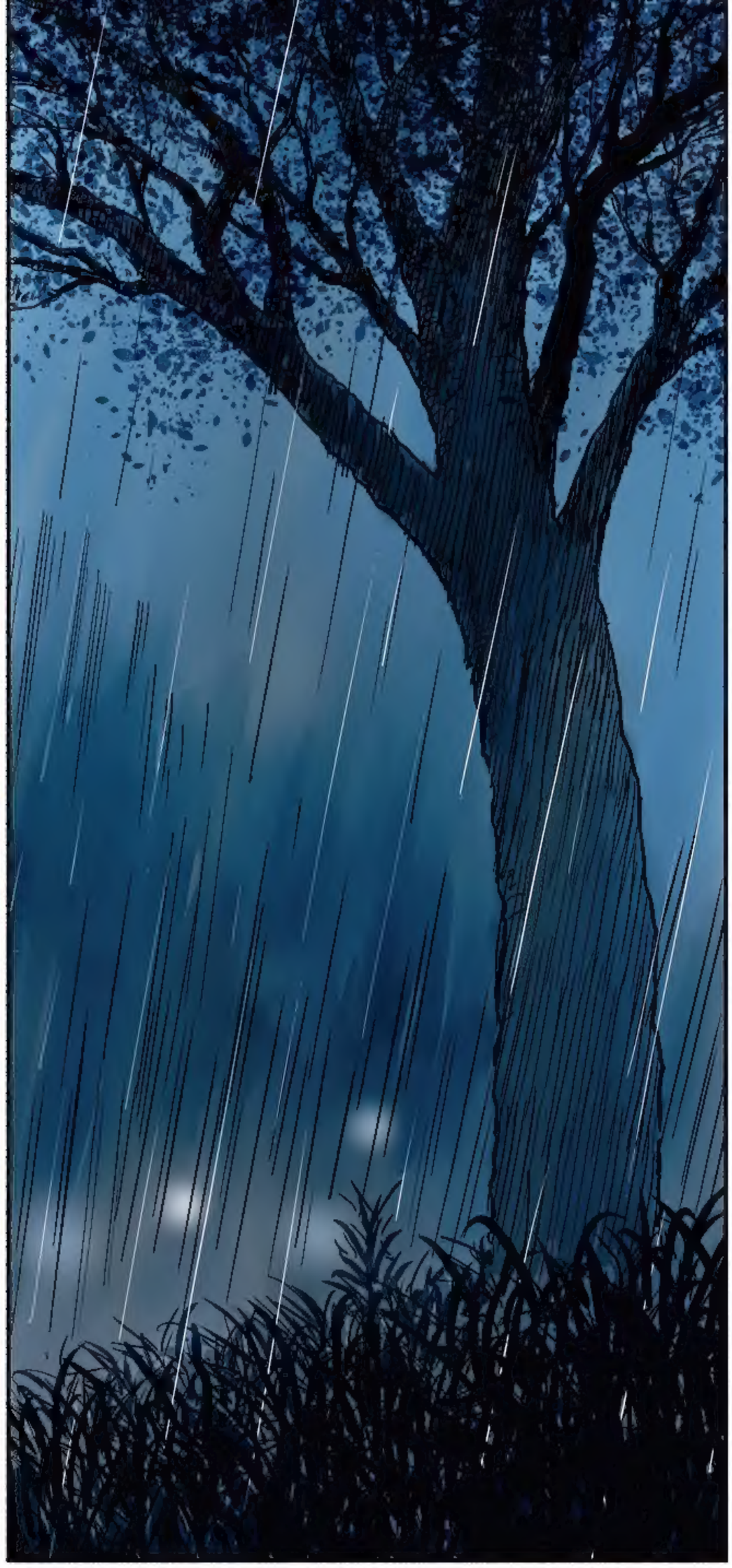
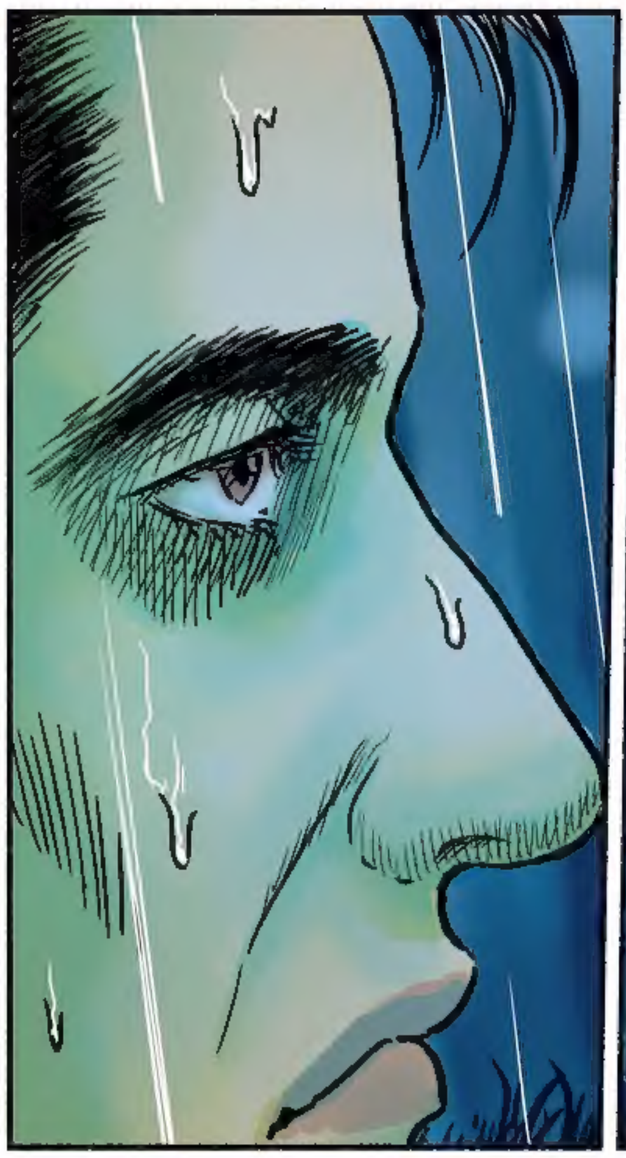
CHAIN No. 1: Yozo Oba





JUNE 13, 1948

TAMAGAWA CANAL

CHAIN No. 1: Yozo Oba

PHEW.

YES... WE WILL.

NOW WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER.

ギュッ

BUT... YOU BELONG TO ME NOW. ME ALONE.

I SUPPOSE THERE'LL BE A TERRIFIC FUSS TOMORROW. IT'S TOO BAD.

YOU DESERVE TO WIN THE AKUTAGAWA PRIZE.

SUCH A MAN OF LETTERS. YOU'VE WRITTEN SO MANY BRILLIANT WORKS.

YOU'VE CARRIED ME ALL THIS WAY.

THAT'S RIGHT, SACHI.

KOFF!

NGH!

SHALL WE GO?

NOW...

YOU POOR THING. YOUR BODY AND SOUL ARE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED. THE WORLD... THOSE PEOPLE DID THIS TO YOU.

SQUEEZE

YES... LET'S GO.

SLIP SLIDE

SLIP

GRAB

ZSH ZSH

SPLASH

RRRIP

AM I REALLY GOING TO DIE THIS TIME?

AM I GOING TO DIE?

Mine has been a life of much shame.

...was so great as to make me groan night after night in my bed. It drove me indeed to the brink of lunacy.

My apprehension on discovering that my concept of happiness seemed to be completely at variance with that of everyone else...

I have no understanding of other human beings.

If you've slept soundly at night the morning is exhilarating, I suppose.

Perhaps you do not have these griefs...

....would be enough to make a murderer of him.

It's as if I have been burdened with a pack of ten misfortunes, any of which if borne by my neighbor...

What should I talk about, how should I say it? I don't know.

It is almost impossible for me to converse with other people.

...my clowning.

That's how I happened to invent...

CHAK

CHAK

CHAK

CHAK

CHAK

SMIRK

GRIN

SMIRK

GRIN

GULP

YOZO!!

EAT PROPERLY! IF YOU DON'T EAT, YOU WILL DIE!

HUMAN BEINGS WORK TO EARN THEIR BREAD!

...

As a child the most painful part of the day was unquestionably mealtime in my own home.

I have not had the remotest idea of the nature of the sensation of "hunger."

THAT IF YOU DON'T EAT, YOU DIE...

...THAT'S JUST A SUPERSTITION.

It may be an act of prayer to propitiate whatever spirits might be lurking around the house.

What extraordinarily solemn faces they all make as they eat! It seems to be some kind of ritual.

Why must human beings eat three meals every single day?

Perhaps they were the spirits of the dead who held some grudge against the large landowning Oba family who had exploited them.

Once I began to think in such a fashion, I felt as though there were spirits all about the room.

I SHALL EAT!

FATHER, I DO NOT WISH TO DIE!

O-OH!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOZO? WHY ARE YOU SO QUIET?!

...I was doubly afraid of living human beings.

But more than such spirits...

I'M SO HAPPY!

AAH, DELI-CIOUS!

SCARF

SCARF

SCARF

SCARF

YOU ARE A STRANGE ONE.

HEH.

HEE HEE HEE!

HO HO HO!

HA HA HA!

HO HO HO!

HO HO HO! YOZO TRULY IS A STRANGE CHILD.

...

...felt as if I were suffering in hell.

I have always...

A WATER GUN!!

I WANT A KEWPIE DOLL.

A MOTHER-OF-PEARL SASH CLIP.

MM-HMM. MM-HMM.

I'LL BE LEAVING FOR TOKYO FOR A WHILE AGAIN TOMORROW. WHAT PRESENTS WOULD YOU LIKE, CHILDREN?

...

HOW ABOUT YOU, YOZO?

The fatal words "Wouldn't you like one?" made it quite impossible for me to answer.

Whenever I was asked what I wanted my first impulse was to answer "Nothing."

THEY SELL THEM NOW IN CHILDREN'S SIZES. WOULDN'T YOU LIKE ONE?

HOW ABOUT A MASK FOR THE NEW YEAR LION DANCE?

...

A BOOK WOULD BE BEST, I SUPPOSE.

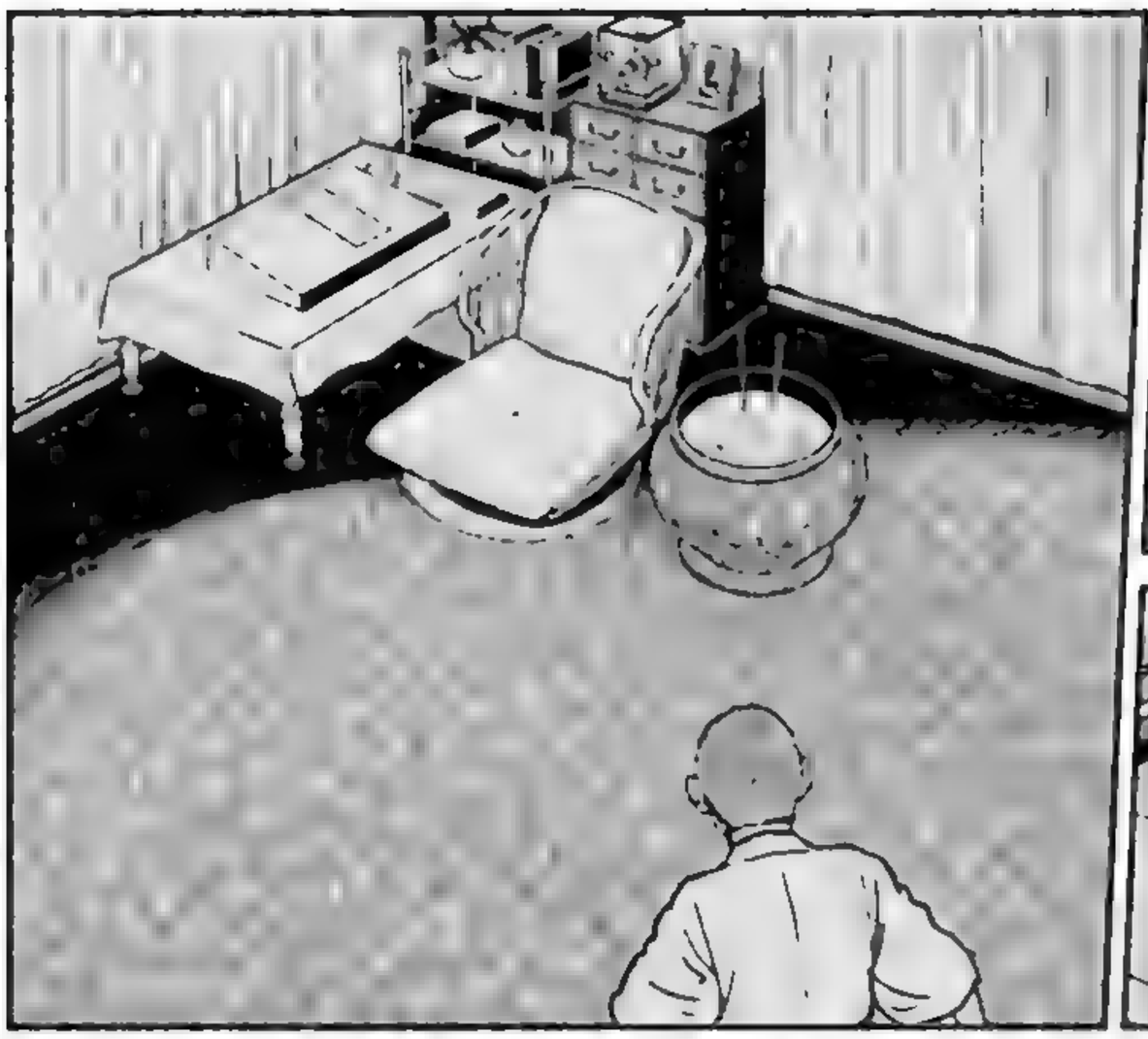
SLAM

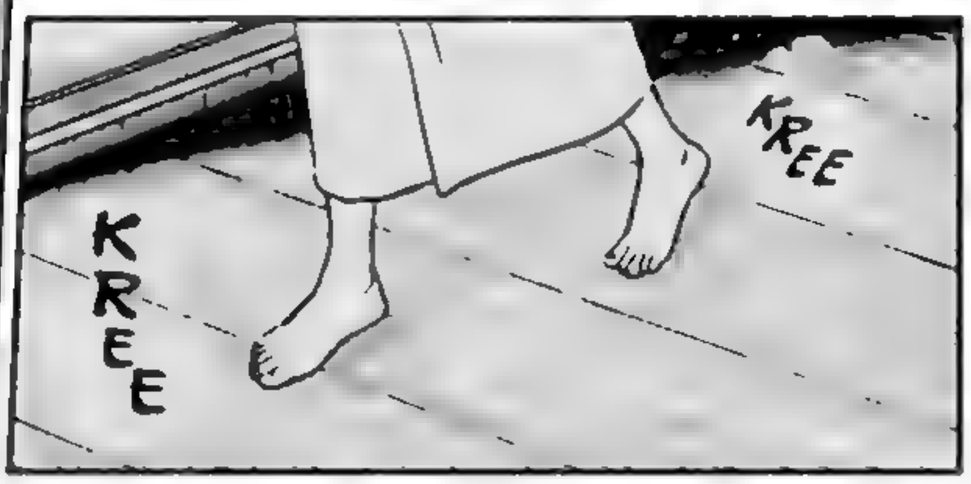
I SEE...

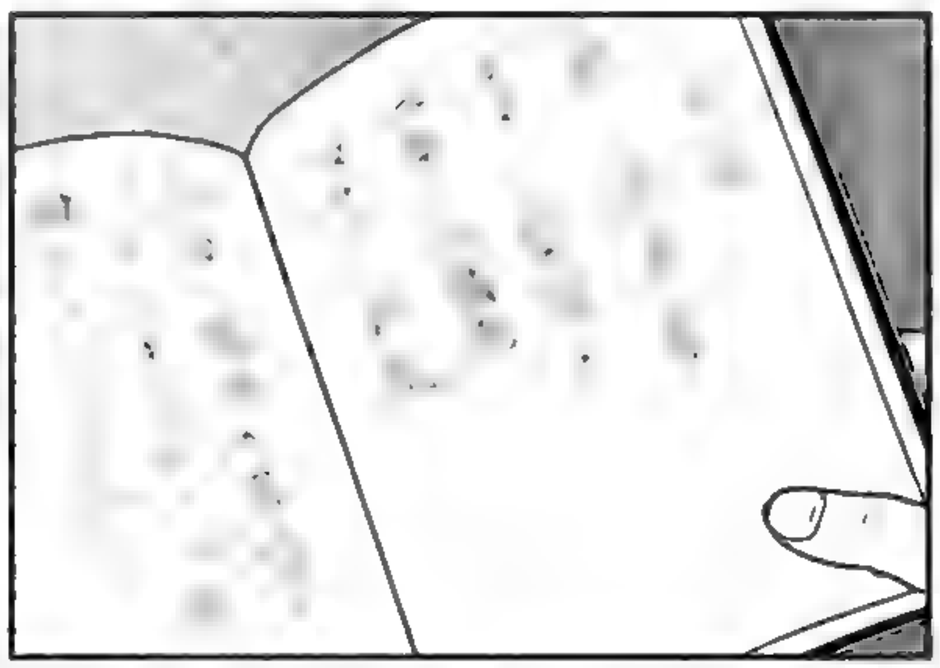
WHAT A FAILURE!

...

I ANGERED FATHER.







*Yozo: Lion mask

SOME OF YOZO'S MISCHIEF. IF HE WANTED THE MASK SO MUCH ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS TELL ME.

HA HA HA! WHAT DO YOU THINK I FOUND WHEN I OPENED MY NOTEBOOK IN THE TOY SHOP?

...was rewarded by the great success I had hoped for.

This desperate expedient, taken to restore Father's good humor...

THE MASTER HAS RETURNED!

AAH, WHAT A DELIGHT. ASK YOZO TO COME HERE AT ONCE.

I BURST OUT LAUGHING IN FRONT OF EVERYONE IN THE TOY SHOP!

AH WAH WAH WAH!!

PLINKA PLINKA

PLUNKA PLINKA

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

AH WAH WAH WAH!!

DANGLE

I feigned an innocent optimism; I gradually perfected myself in the role of the farcical eccentric.

HA HA HA!

As long as I can make them laugh, it doesn't matter how, I'll be all right. I shall be nothing, the wind, the sky.

HA HA HA!

I was well on my way to winning respect.

But what of my schooling?

*Final exam results 1. Yozo Oba

期末試験成績
一 大庭葉蔵
二 佐藤治介
三 三島太郎
四 川端九太郎
五 坂口吾助
六 石川昇
七 檀大雄
八 織田龍之介

...than because, in the vulgar parlance, I had "brains."

I acquired my reputation at school less because I was the son of a rich family...

Being "respected" ...

YOU'RE A GENIUS.

AMAZING!

YOU GOT THE TOP MARK EVEN THOUGH YOU'VE BEEN OUT SICK FOR ALMOST A YEAR.

YOZO, YOU'RE AMAZING!

YOU'RE SO SMART!

...and made him suffer a shame worse than death.

My definition of a "respected" man was one who had succeeded almost completely in hoodwinking people...

...but who was finally seen through by some omniscient, omnipotent person who ruined him...

YOCHAN, YOUR MANGA'S SO GOOD!

HA HA HA!

AND SO, DOCTOR KNOW-IT-ALL WAS THWARTED IN HIS EVIL DEED.

盗怪
土博ヤジンナ

*Dr. Know-It-A

THERE ARE LIMITS TO CARELESSNESS, CHILD!

...AND MISTAKING THE SPITTOON IN THE CORRIDOR FOR A URINAL.

THIS STORY ABOUT RIDING THE TRAIN WITH YOUR MOTHER...

MR. OBA, I MUST ADMONISH YOU ABOUT YOUR COMPOSITION.

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

*Faculty Room

HA HA HA!

BUT THE SPITTOON IS REALLY SOMETHING.

TO TELL THE TRUTH, I LOOK FORWARD TO THEM EVERY TIME.

HA HA HA!

ONCE AGAIN, YOZO OBA'S COMPOSITION IS A MASTER-PIECE.

HA HA HA!

教員室

I had succeeded in escaping from being respected.

I had succeeded in appearing mischievous.

A mischievous little imp.

...was one diametrically opposed to the role of a mischievous imp.

My true nature, however...

...by the maids and manservants; I was being corrupted.

Already by that time I had been taught a lamentable thing...

"What do you mean by not having faith in human beings?" Please do not deride me so.

But I wondered if in the end I would not be argued into silence by someone in good graces with the world, by the excuses of which the world approved.

Perhaps I might have been able to confide to someone about the crime.

大庭先生大演說會

Is it not true that human beings are living in mutual distrust?

衆議院議員
大庭源之介
凱旋大演說會

* Congressman Gennosuke Oba, Victory Speech

YES! BEST IN JAPAN!

YAAH

YAAH

CLAP

CLAP

THAT'S HOW IT IS!

AHEM.

I'D LIKE TO JUST HEAD HOME, BUT I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD GIVE HIM OUR REGARDS...

GOT THAT RIGHT.

HARD TO BELIEVE HE'S IN THE HOUSE. HE'S REALLY NOTHING BUT A COUNTRY MONEYLENDER!

AAH, THAT WAS SO LONG.

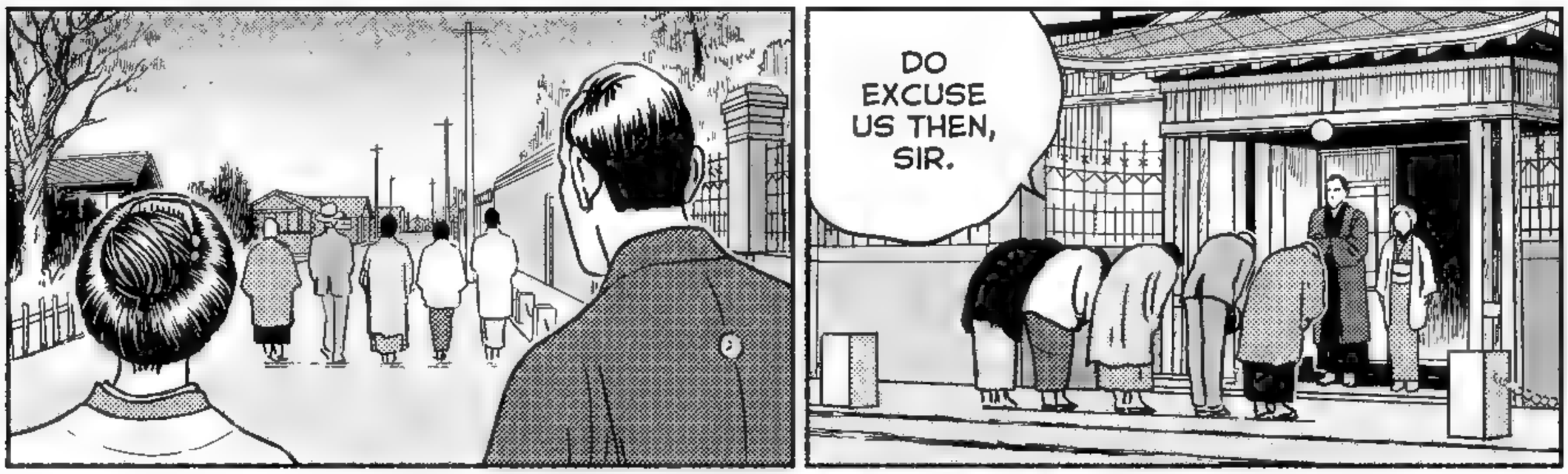
NOTHING MORE PAINFUL THAN AN INEPT SPEECH.

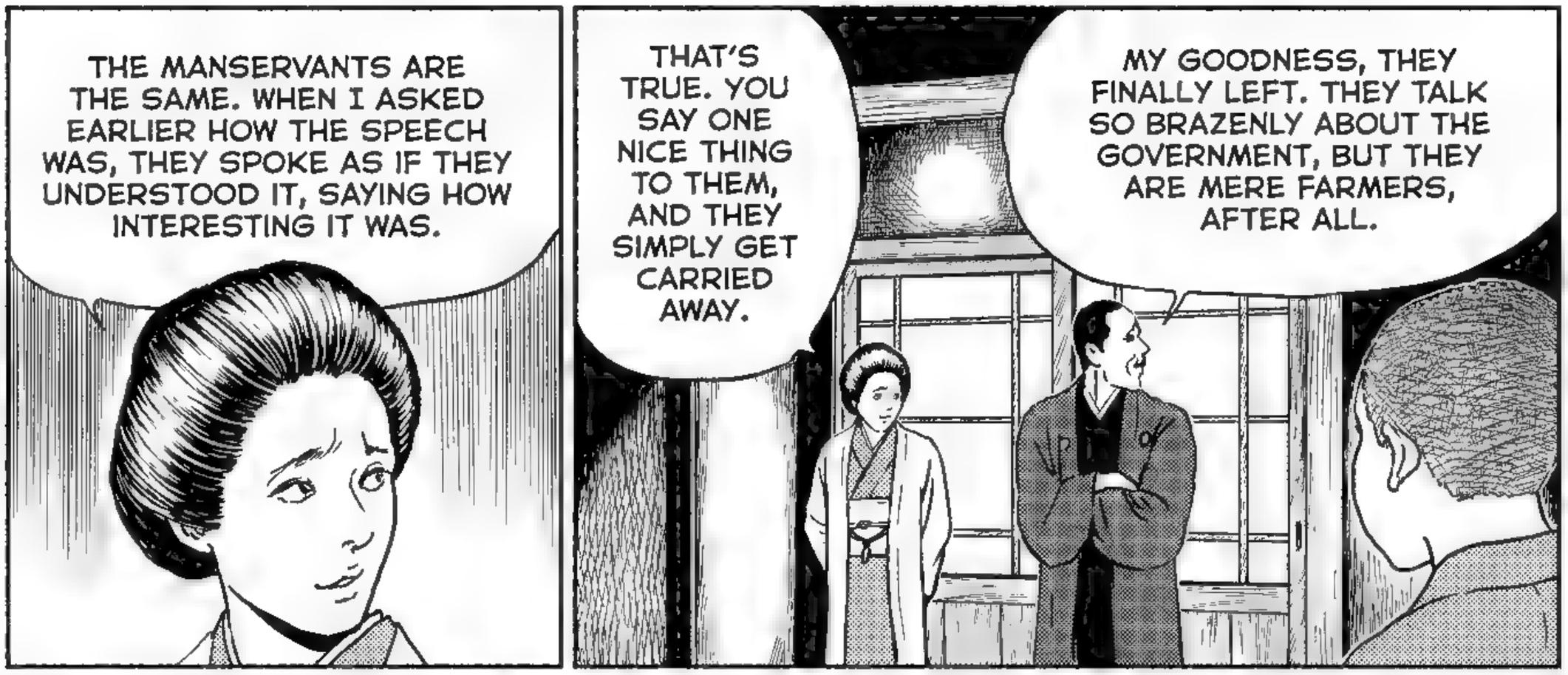
I VALUE YOU ALL HIGHLY.

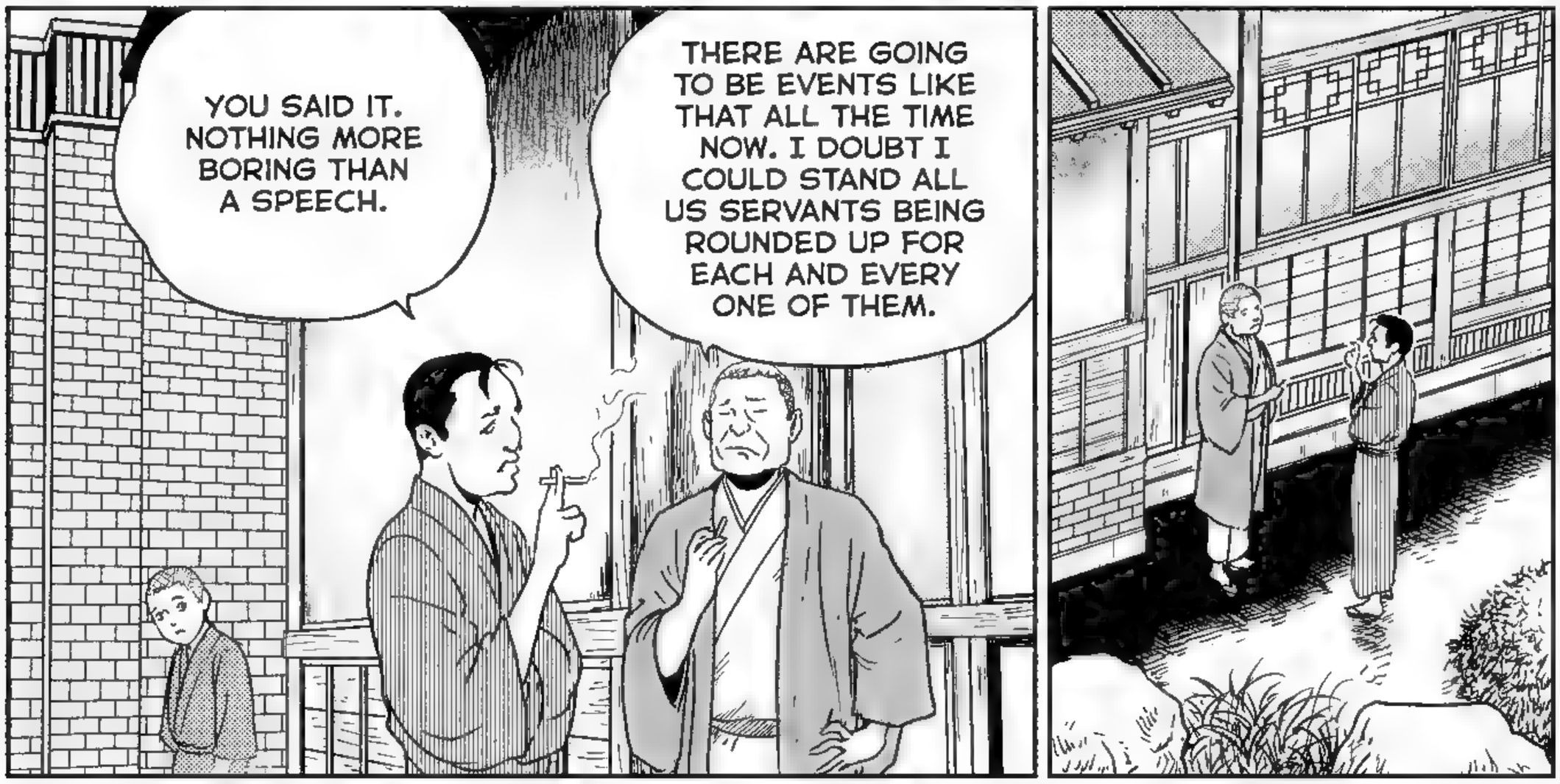
MM. THANK YOU. IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT.

TRULY. I WAS ENTHRALLED BY YOUR ELOQUENCE!

MR. OBA, THAT WAS A WONDERFUL SPEECH!


DO EXCUSE US THEN, SIR.


THE MANSERVANTS ARE THE SAME. WHEN I ASKED EARLIER HOW THE SPEECH WAS, THEY SPOKE AS IF THEY UNDERSTOOD IT, SAYING HOW INTERESTING IT WAS.
THAT'S TRUE. YOU SAY ONE NICE THING TO THEM, AND THEY SIMPLY GET CARRIED AWAY.
MY GOODNESS, THEY FINALLY LEFT. THEY TALK SO BRAZENLY ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY ARE MERE FARMERS, AFTER ALL.


YOU SAID IT. NOTHING MORE BORING THAN A SPEECH.
THERE ARE GOING TO BE EVENTS LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME NOW. I DOUBT I COULD STAND ALL US SERVANTS BEING ROUNDED UP FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM.

...purely, happily, serenely, while engaged in deceit.
I find it difficult to understand the kind of human being who lives ...

NOW, YOUNG MASTER, I AM "IT." RUN AWAY.

MASTER YOZO, YOU MUST BE UNHAPPY BY YOURSELF.

LET YONEKICHI HERE KEEP YOU COMPANY. SHALL WE PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK?

SEE?

HA HA HA HA! IF YOU DON'T RUN FASTER, I SHALL CATCH YOU!

HUFF

HUFF

I GOT YOU!

ZSH

ZSH

YOU MUSTN'T CRY OUT.

PLEASE STAY STILL.

YONEKICHI'S GOING TO TEACH YOU ANOTHER BIT OF FUN NOW.

YOU REALLY ARE A CUTE ONE, MASTER YOZO...

PINKIE PROMISE.

ALL RIGHT? AND THIS IS JUST OUR LITTLE SECRET.

I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING THAT FEELS EVEN BETTER THAN THE OTHER DAY.

GOODNESS! MASTER YOZO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

...

...OH, NOTHING.

IT'S REALLY NOTH-ING.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING, YOU CAN TALK TO ME, YOUR OLD TOMEH.

IS THAT YOUR "NOTHING" FACE THEN?

COME TO MY ROOM.

I KNOW. MY FAMILY BACK HOME SENT ME SOME SWEETS. COME ON.

WELL, YOU ARE A MISCHIE-VOUS ONE, AFTER ALL.

LOOKS GREAT, TOMEH!

WOW!

MNCH MNCH

THIS *AMANATTO* IS DELICIOUS. PLEASE HAVE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT.

SODE AND TOYO ARE BOTH OUT ON ERRANDS TODAY, SO THERE'S NO NEED TO FEEL LIKE YOU'RE TROUBLING ANYONE.

AAH, JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT WITH ME.

YOU REALLY ARE CUTE, MASTER YOZO.

SQUEEZE !

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

But I endured it. I even felt as if it enabled me to see one more particular aspect of human beings. I smiled in my weakness.

I now think that to perpetrate such a thing on a small child is the ugliest, vilest, cruelest crime.

I could not confide these hateful crimes even to my parents, and this in later years was to become one of the causes of my being taken advantage of in so many ways.

I also have the impression that many women have been able, instinctively, to sniff out this loneliness of mine.

...despite the fact that I hardly studied for the entrance exam.

I somehow managed to be accepted to a school in Tohoku standing on the coast in a snowstorm of cherry blossoms...

It was inconceivable that someone who has been quite a success in his home theater would fail away from home.

An actor dreads most the audience in his hometown.

I was left in the care of a distant relative who had a house nearby.

I found it far more agreeable than my native place.

But my acting talents had unquestionably matured.

I'M GONNA BE LAAAAATE!!

The fear of human beings continued to writhe in my breast—I am not sure whether more or less intensely than before.

I managed to win popularity with my school-mates.

?

TOTAL FAILURE.

OBA DID IT AGAIN!

HA HA HA!

TAKEICHI'S BRAINS DON'T WORK. SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT TO HIM. NOTHING EVER GETS THROUGH.

HEY, TAKEICHI!! DON'T JUST STAND THERE. GET CLEANING!

...and such clumsiness in military drill and physical training that he was a perpetual "onlooker."

He had a total lack of proficiency in his studies...

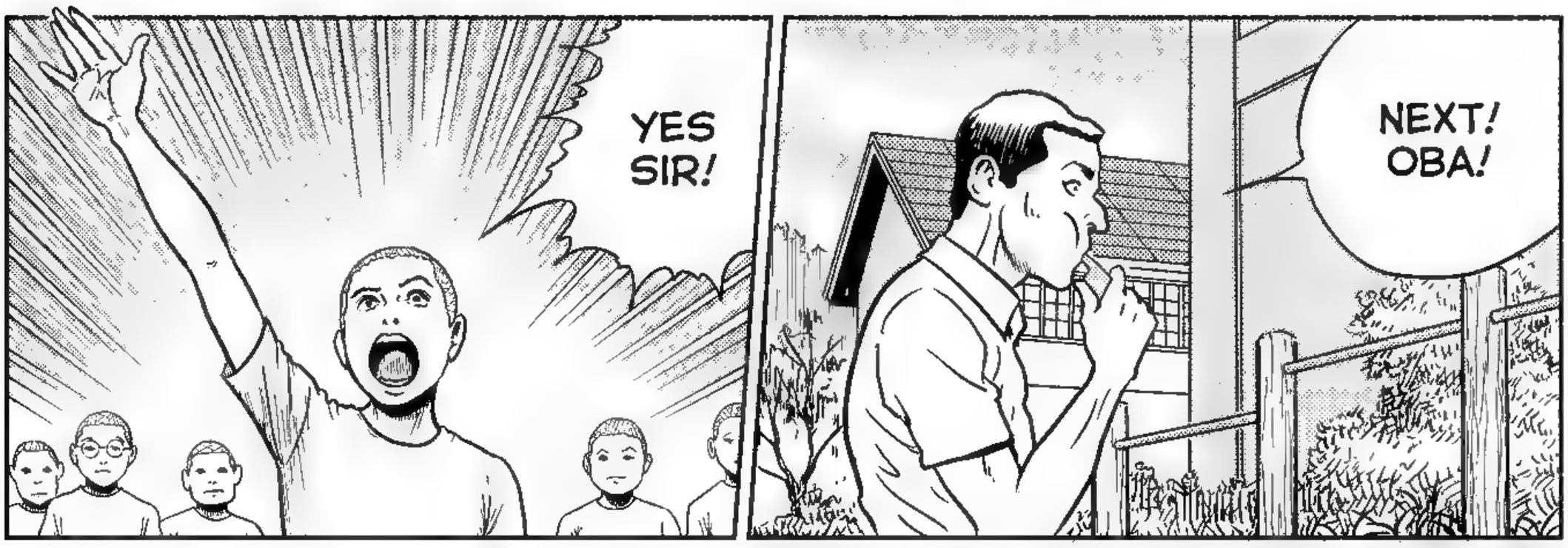
A student with no redeeming features.

Takeichi was the puniest boy in the class...

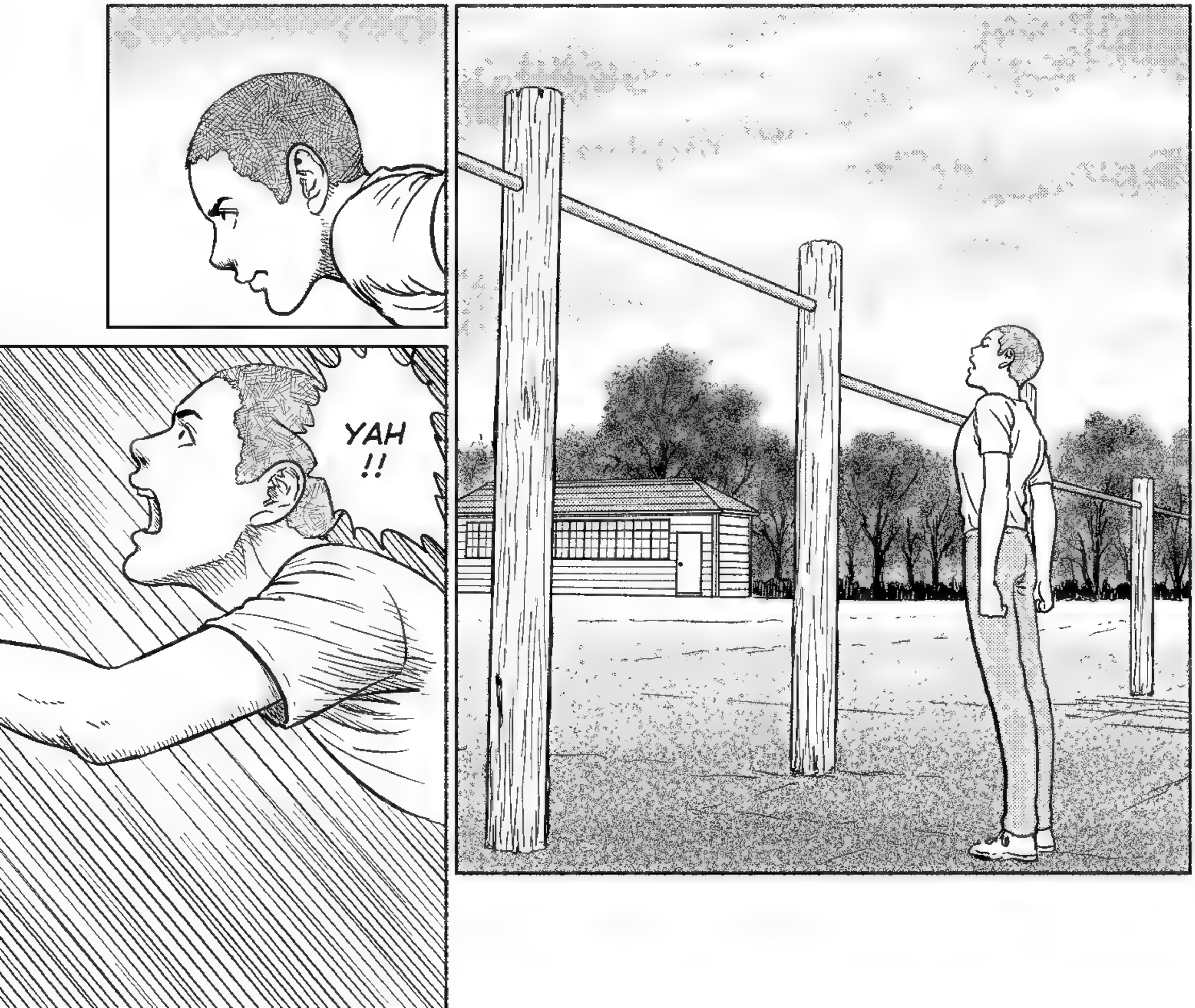
...with a scrofulous face.

I was one who had escaped being respected.

But Takeichi was a person scorned by all.


YES SIR!
NEXT! OBA!

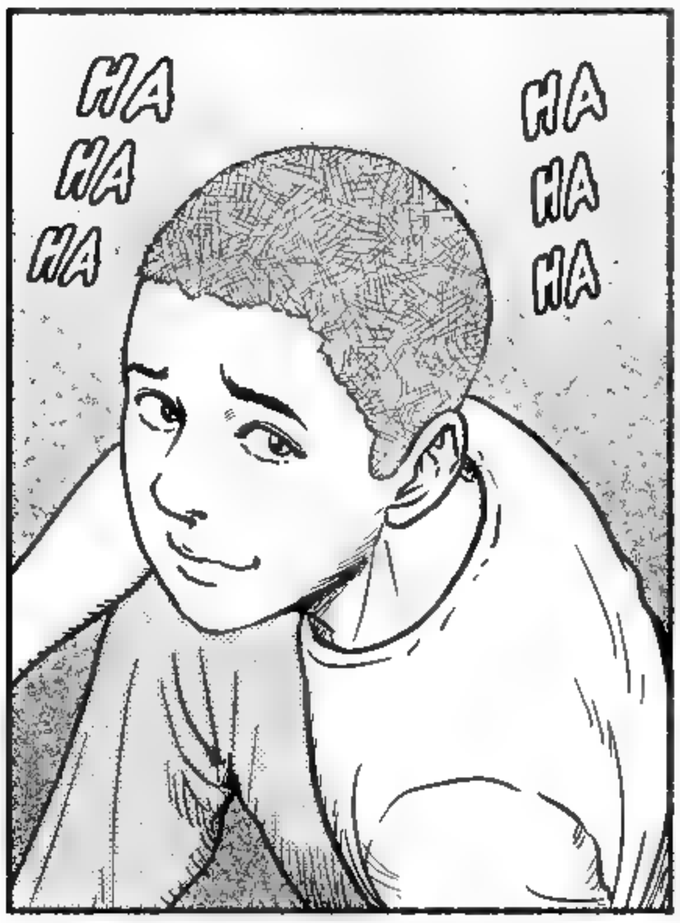
WHOA! OBA LOOKS SERIOUS FOR ONCE.
AHEM.


YAH !!

OWOOOOOOW!!

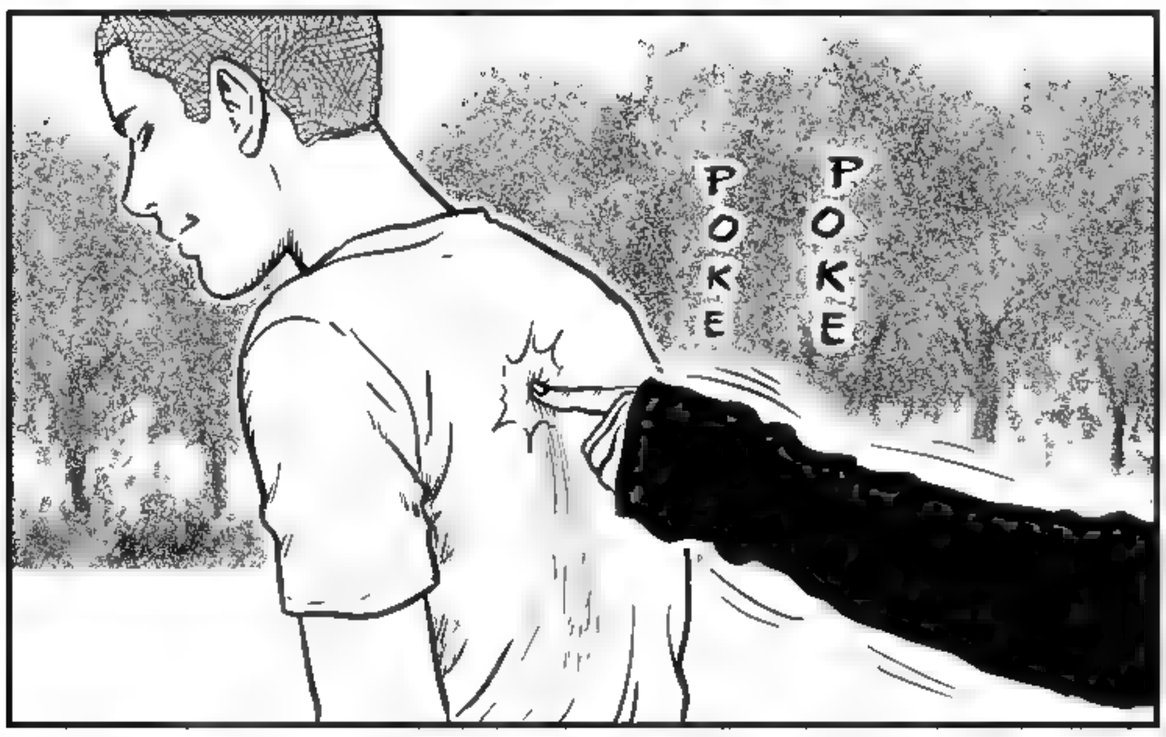
THUD

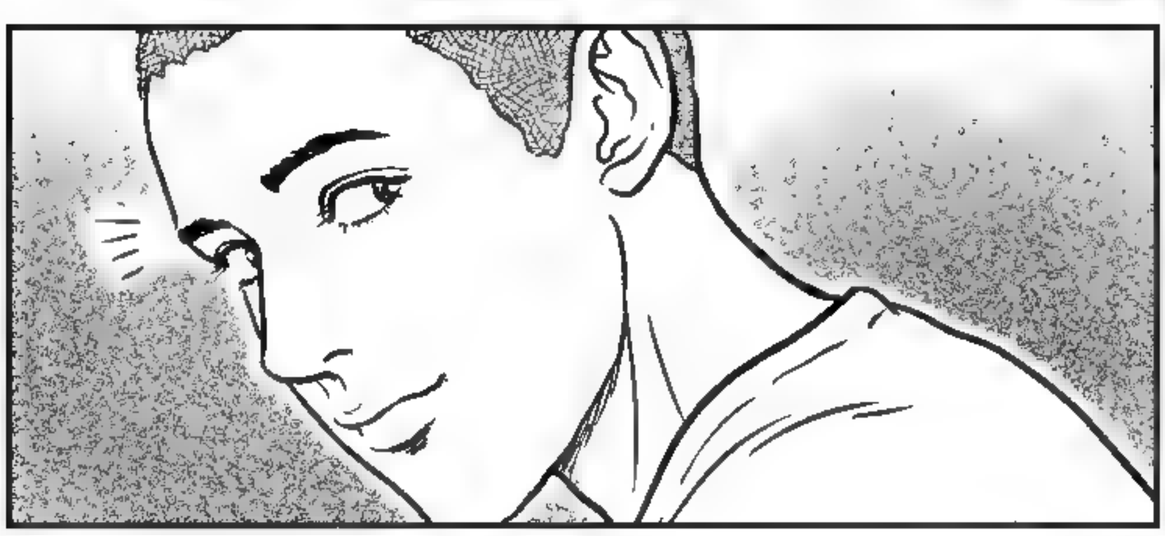
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!!
THE FAILURE OF THE CENTURY!!

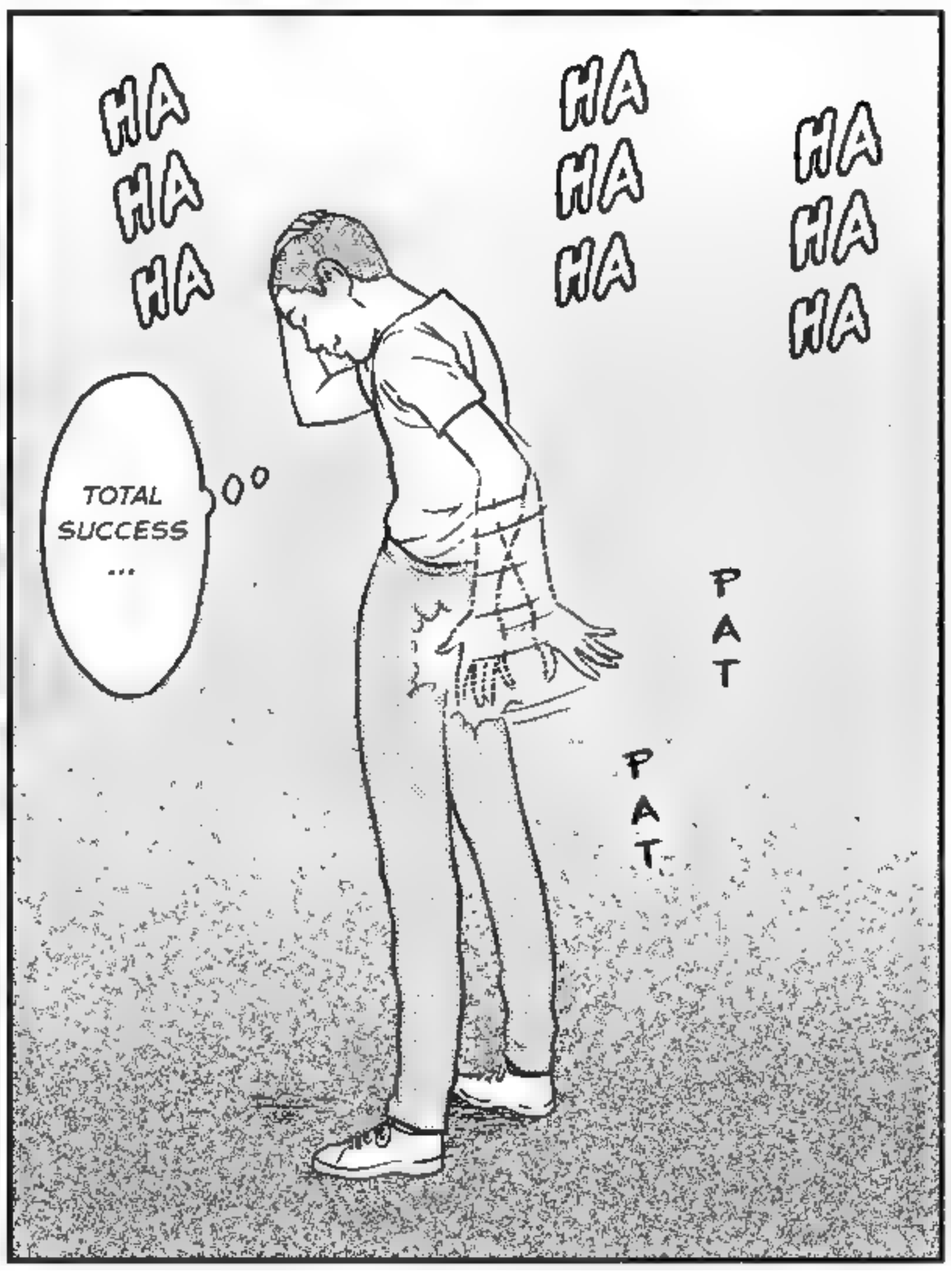

HA HA HA
HA HA HA

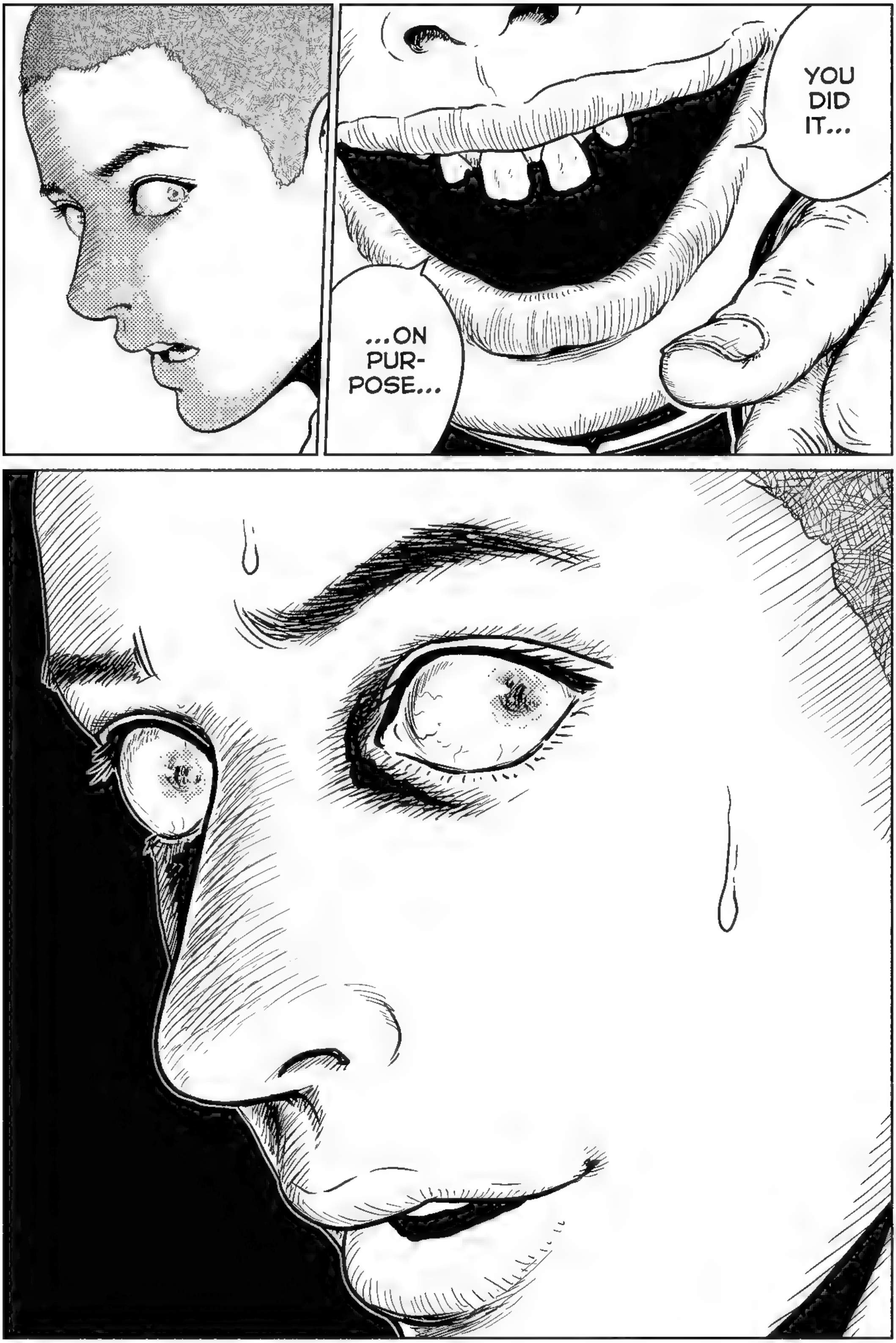
OKAY, NEXT.
HONESTLY... THIS CLASS ALWAYS GETS OUT OF CONTROL BECAUSE OF YOU, OBA. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?

HA HA HA HA!
OF COURSE OBA'D FLUB IT UP!


POKE
POKE




HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
TOTAL SUCCESS ...
PAT
PAT


YOU DID IT...
...ON PUR-POSE...

I trembled all over.

...ON PUR-POSE...

That someone would detect that I had deliberately missed the bar! That Takeichi should have been the one!

YOU DID IT...

AAHH!!

AH ...

It was all I could do to suppress a wild shriek of terror.

I felt as if the world before me had burst in an instant into the raging flames of hell.

CHAIN No. 2: Clown

AAAAAH !!

The anxiety and dread.

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

I'M A COAL SPRITE!

Takeichi had detected my clowning...

...Takeichi would see through it.

Whatever I did...

I'M A COAL SPRITE!

FWP

FWP

...start spreading the word to everyone he saw.

I was sure he would...

I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING...

AAH... I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING...

I felt I had to win Takeichi over somehow.

I could no longer stand it.

TAKE-ICHI!

DING DONG

COME ON!

COME ON! THEY'RE REALLY GOOD.

MY FAMILY JUST SENT ME SOME DELICIOUS SWEETS.

SAY, WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER TO MY ROOM?

AAH! IT'S POURING ALL OF A SUDDEN!

P S S S S S H

However, one day after school let out...

He always gave me...

...only blank stares.

AAH! WE'RE SOAKED.

AUNTIE!

TAKEICHI, MY LODGINGS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. I'LL LEND YOU MY UMBRELLA.

LET'S GO!

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE'RE COMPLETELY SOAKED.

OH, SETCHAN!

MOTHER'S JUST GONE OUT.

OH GOODNESS, YOU'RE HOME, YOCHAN!

I'LL DRY YOUR THINGS FOR YOU.

HOW AWFUL!

DO LET ME SEE!

WHAT ?!

THEY MUST'VE GOT WET IN THE RAIN.

MY EARS HURT...

SETCHAN'S MY YOUNGER COUSIN. SHE'S PRETTY CUTE, HM?

OH, YOU'RE RIGHT! HOW DREADFUL... I'LL GO FETCH THE MEDICAL BAG.

IT MUST HURT!

THIS LOOKS TERRIBLE.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, THANKS, SETCHAN. NOW, TAKEICHI, COME UPSTAIRS.

HERE, YOCHAN. AN EAR PICK, COTTON, WOOL, AND ALCOHOL! WOULD YOU RATHER I DO IT?

IT'S ALL MY FAULT...

I'M SO SORRY I DRAGGED YOU OUT IN ALL THIS RAIN.

STAY VERY STILL, ALL RIGHT?

NOW, I'LL JUST TAKE CARE OF THIS FOR YOU.

AH!

NO.

IT DOESN'T HURT, DOES IT?

If I were to simply take this metal ear pick and...

Then a fearsome thought rose up in the back of my mind.

OBA.

?!

WHAT ?!

I'LL BET LOTS OF WOMEN WILL FALL FOR YOU.

I have wished innumerable times that I might meet with a violent death, but I have never once desired to kill anybody.

Is this what they mean by being possessed by an evil spirit?

PHEW

HA HA HA!

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, TAKEICHI?

This, I was to learn in later years, was a kind of demoniacal prophecy.

What brought me back to myself was Takeichi's idiotic statement, "I'll bet lots of women will fall for you."

IT'S A PICTURE OF A GHOST.

OBA.

After that day, Takeichi would occasionally come and spend time with me in my room.

DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY'RE GHOSTS TOO?

I knew that it was a picture of van Gogh.

A GHOST?

HOW ABOUT THESE?

I WISH I COULD PAINT PICTURES OF GHOSTS LIKE THIS.

MODIGLIANI

THAT'S TERRIFIC.

IT LOOKS LIKE A HORSE OUT OF HELL.

And they did not fob people off with clowning, they did their best to depict these monsters just as they had appeared.

I realized at that moment that there are some whose dread of human beings is so morbid they yearn to see monsters of ever more horrible shapes.

TAKEICHI ...

Painters who have had this mentality, after repeated wounds at the hands of the apparitions called human beings, plainly saw monsters in broad daylight...

...AND DEVILS AND HORSES OUT OF HELL.

I'M GOING TO PAINT TOO. I'M GOING TO PAINT PICTURES OF GHOSTS ...

SKRITCH

SKRITCH

OH, SISTER. SETCHAN.

FLP

JUMP

KLATTER

ARE YOU STUDYING ?

HA HA HA!

I hid it from the cousins in my lodging who would visit my room whenever they had the time...

...and pushed ahead with the creation of my "horse from hell" bit by bit.

HA HA HA!

HEY, YOCHAN? TELL US ANOTHER FUNNY STORY.

TODAY AT SCHOOL THE GEOGRAPHY TEACHER, THE ONE WE CALL THE WALRUS...

AH, YES.

The pictures I drew were so heart-rending...

...as to stupefy even myself.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IT'S A PICTURE OF A GHOST.

REALLY ?!

YOU'LL BE A GREAT PAINTER SOME DAY.

...

THIS GHOST IS YOU.

IT *DOES* LOOK JUST LIKE YOU, AFTER ALL.

THIS IS YOUR TRUE FACE.

At that moment, when my fear and confusion had reached an extreme, words that surprised even myself fell from my lips.

I forgot that he was a fearsome presence who clearly saw through to the worthless person I was.

It seemed I had let my guard down too far with Takeichi...

?

BY THE WAY, TAKEICHI... I CAN'T UNDERESTIMATE YOU, EITHER.

AFTER ALL, YOU KNOW MY YOUNGER COUSIN, SETCHAN?

YOU'RE THE ONE WOMEN WILL FALL FOR.

REALLY?

WHAT ?!

SHE'S CLEARLY FALLEN FOR YOU.

THE OTHER DAY, YOU CAME UP IN CONVERSATION AT SUPPER, AND SHE—WELL, HER FACE TURNED QUITE RED SUDDENLY.

But on the spur of the moment, I told him the exact opposite.

But he was only ever the object of my cousins' scorn.

Of course, this was an utter lie. Takeichi had indeed come up over supper.

OBA. WOULD YOU DELIVER THIS LETTER FOR ME?

I never dreamed at the time that this makeshift clowning lie...

...would eventually lead to such an awful situation.

...OH!

I'M TOO EMBAR-RASSED ...

GIVE IT TO SETCHAN.

HM? WHAT IS IT?

Takeichi's awkward pen spelled out his passionate feelings for her.

When I returned to my room, rather than give the letter to Setchan, I gently opened it myself.

I absolutely did not anticipate that Takeichi would take such action.

OH, SHE WAS SO DELIGHTED SHE HAD TEARS IN HER EYES.

SHE WAS VERY HAPPY.

OH, YES.

OBA...DID YOU GIVE HER MY LETTER? WHAT DID SETCHAN SAY?

Given that she didn't know what was going on, it was no wonder that Setchan gradually grew to dislike him.

And as if because of that, Takeichi would come by my lodging almost every day.

When he saw Setchan, a smile would rise up on his face, as if he were about to say something.

IF YOU ACT ANY MORE STRANGELY, I SHALL HAVE MOTHER TALK TO YOU!

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?! BEHAVE YOUR-SELF!!

And then one day...

YOU! DON'T COME NEAR ME!

AAAH ...

AAH...

AH...

DON'T TOUCH ME!!

WHAP

YOU MAKE ME WANT TO THROW UP!

YOU'RE SO CREEPY!

OHHH...

UH... UNH...

...

WHAAA...

WHA...

DON'T BRING THIS BOY HOME ANYMORE. I CAN'T STAND IT!

YOCHAN, DON'T JUST STAND THERE. SAY SOMETHING!

IT'S SIMPLY WICKED!

YOCHAN! HONESTLY!!

SO MEAN! SO MALICIOUS !!

...Takeichi ended his own life.

That night, in the barn of his house...

...IS DEAD...

TAKE-ICHI...

It is with a sense of liberation I cannot suppress...and a joy that I have never felt before.

Aah, dear Lord, please forgive me. It is not with self-reproach and regret that my own body shakes now.

Now there was no one who knew my true identity.

The tail of that horse from hell was now completely concealed.

However, something wasn't right.

HA HA HA!

It seemed that my clowning could now be altogether at my leisure.

HA HA HA!

ALL RIGHT, HERE WE GO!

HM? OH, NOTHING.

HEY, OBA! WHAT'S WRONG?

HA HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA! YOU DID IT AGAIN, OBA.

OW!

OW OW OW.

YOU ...

ON PUR- POSE ...

ON PUR- POSE...

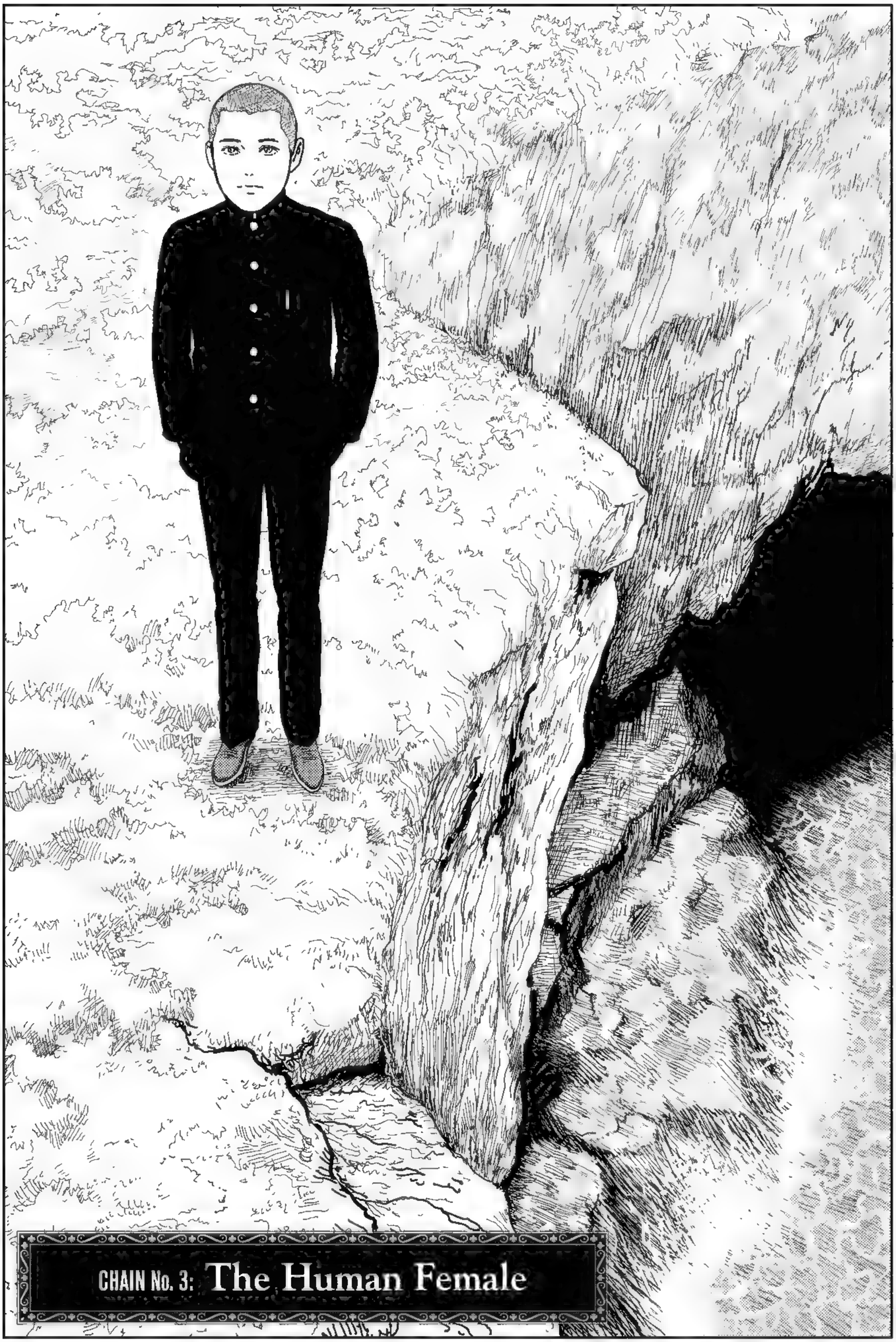
...DID IT...

He continued to torment me.

ON PURPOSE ...

Takeichi's ghost appeared any number of times after that.

ON PURPOSE ...


CHAIN No. 3: The Human Female

HA HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA HA HA

I have always found the female of the human species many times more difficult to understand than the male.

HO HO HO! SO FUNNY! HONESTLY, YOZO, YOU ARE SO MUCH FUN!

HE DIDN'T! *HA HA HA HA!*

AND THEN THE GEOGRAPHY TEACHER, THE WALRUS, SLID BACKWARD WITH HIS SKIS STILL ON.

Behind the amusing tales that slipped from my own mouth, I was simply terrified in my heart.

No matter how long I went on with my antics, they would ask for more, and I would become exhausted responding to their insatiable demands for encores.

COME ON, YOCHAN! TELL US AN EVEN FUNNIER STORY.

PUT THEM ON. HERE, TAKE THESE GLASSES.

DON'T MAKE SUCH A FUSS.

WHAT? WHY, SETCHAN?

YOCHAN, LET'S SEE HOW YOU LOOK WITH GLASSES ON.

IT WAS OUR FATHER'S.

AND NOW PUT THIS ON.

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA!

EXACTLY LIKE HAROLD LLOYD!!

OH, GOODNESS! YOU LOOK EXACTLY LIKE HIM!

(^_^)

EEEE! YOZO, YOU ARE A DELIGHT!

HA HA HA HA !!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. I SHOULD LIKE ON THIS OCCASION TO THANK ALL MY JAPANESE FANS...

HA HA HA HA !!

YOU BE CAREFUL, YOCHAN!

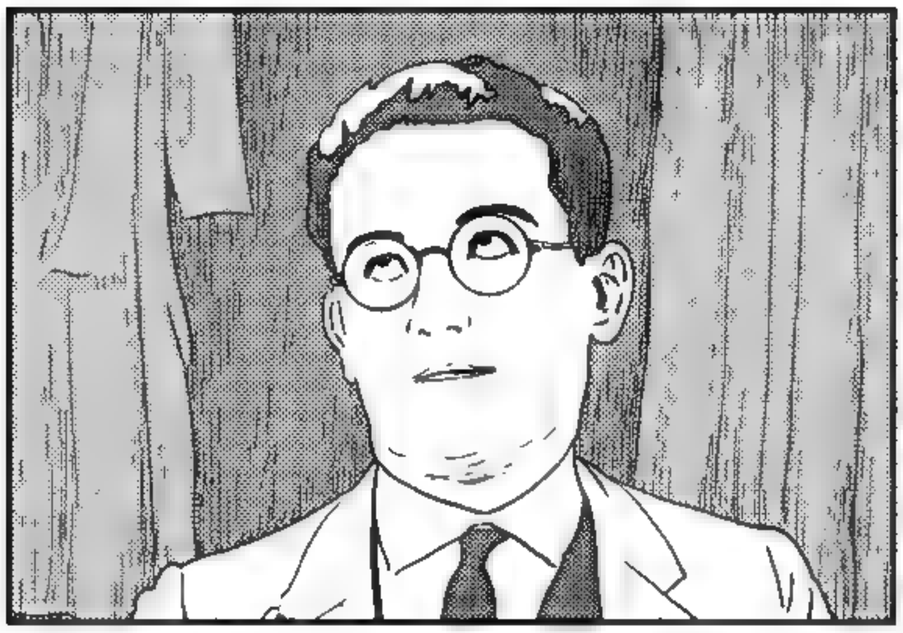
THOSE GIRLS WHO CAME OVER TODAY, THEY'RE BAD GIRLS.

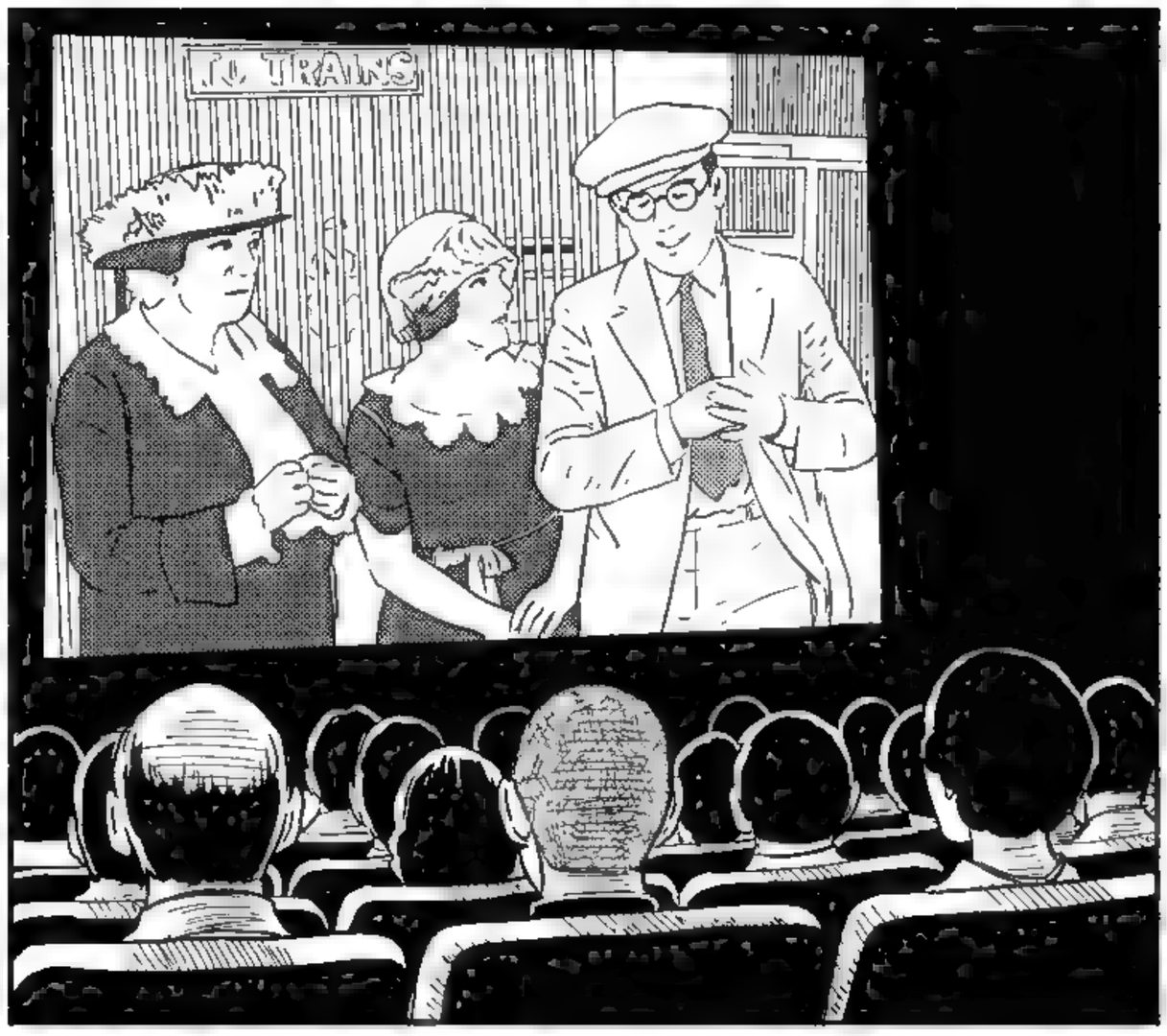
マネキ北東

ロイドの要心無用

...THEN WHY DID YOU GO TO THE TROUBLE OF INVITING THEM OVER?

*Sign: Tohoku Cinema
Banners: *Harold Lloyd in Safety Last!*, *Haunted Valley*




JO TRAINS

IT'S DANGER-OUS!!

YOCHAN, COME DOWN FROM THERE!

SET-CHAN!

NO NEED TO WORRY !!

AH!!

YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

EEEAH !!

AH!!

NOT AT ALL, MR. OBA. PLEASE LEAVE YOZO'S CARE TO US.

MRS. TOYOFUJI, I MUST APOLOGIZE FOR MY SON.

YOU'RE LUCKY YOU ONLY GOT A BROKEN LEG OUT OF IT.

YOZO! YOU FOOLISH, CARELESS BOY!

GRIN

GRIN

HURRY UP AND GET BETTER, OKAY?

HONESTLY, YOCHAN! YOU REALLY ARE AN IDIOT.

...heroically took turns coming in to take care of me.

But in fact, Auntie, Sister and Setchan...

I thought that I would be freed from clowning for the time being due to my hospitalization.

I was secretly relieved.

So that in fact, I did not have the time to rest.

On top of that, I was stuck with offering the nurses a little something, as well.

AND I'M SO HAPPY TO HAVE YOU TAKING CARE OF ME.

IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU.

THE DOCTOR SAID YOU'LL BE ABLE TO GO HOME SOON.

IT'S BEEN TWO MONTHS SINCE YOU CAME TO THE HOSPITAL, *HM?*

YOU ARE HER FAVORITE, AFTER ALL.

SETCHAN WOULD BE ANGRY TO HEAR YOU SAY SUCH THINGS.

WELL ...

I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT PHYSICALLY STRONG, AND YET YOU'RE WATCHING OVER ME SO KINDLY LIKE THIS. I REALLY AM HAPPY.

SETCHAN? BUT I PREFER SOMEONE GENTLE LIKE YOU. VERY MUCH.

MM-HMM.

IS IT GOOD?

OPEN WIDE.

THANKS, SETCHAN.

HERE. I PARED AN APPLE.

THE NEXT DAY

WON-DERFUL.

I'M SO HAPPY.

WHY, YOU, OF COURSE.

WHO'S NICER, ME OR MY SISTER?

YOU'RE FULL OF PEP WHEN EVERYONE'S AROUND, SETCHAN, BUT YOU'RE SO NICE WHEN IT'S JUST YOU AND I.

AND YOU HAVE TO STUDY, YES?

I'M ALL RIGHT.

I DON'T. IT'S SUMMER BREAK.

IT'S OKAY. I SAID I'D WATCH HIM! YOU'RE NOT STRONG, AFTER ALL.

IT'S MY TURN TODAY, SO I'LL GO LOOK AFTER HIM, SETCHAN.

YOU HEAD HOME.

OKAY, IT'S SETTLED.

OH... WELL, THEN ALL RIGHT ...

NOT AT ALL.

IS THAT A BAD THING?

YOCHAN!

SAY, YO-CHAN?

I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.

OH! YOU AGAIN TODAY, SETCHAN?

IF YOU'RE GLAD, THEN KISS ME.

The relationship between the two sisters, which had been so close, was now strained.

However, when I returned, something seemed off.

Soon, I was released from the hospital, but I still had to recuperate for some time further at my lodging.

Even after the break ended, Setchan insisted on staying home from school, but Auntie made quite the fuss and so she left for her studies with a sour face.

Setchan spent every day with me over summer break.

I asked what the matter was, but neither would give me an answer.

I KNOW SETCHAN WOULD BE BETTER.

I'M SORRY YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME, YOCHAN.

WHAT ?

After that, it was largely Sister who took care of me.

AND I'M FOREVER ILL.

B-BUT AN OLDER WOMAN LIKE ME, A DIVORCÉE ...

YOU SEE, I LIKE YOU BEST.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'M HAPPIEST WHEN IT'S YOU TAKING CARE OF ME, SISTER.

WAAAH !!

THAT DOESN'T MATTER! I ADORE YOU THE WAY YOU ARE.

I'M SORRY. I COULDN'T REFUSE HER.

YOU AND SETCHAN IN THE HOSPITAL...

BUT...I *SAW* YOU.

GRAB

AAAH! YO-CHAAAN!

YO-CHAAAN!

I LOVE YOU, TOO, YOCHAN.

I'M SORRY, SISTER.

YOU'RE THE ONE I REALLY LOVE.

DASH

KLATTER

KLATTER

I'M HOME.

TOK TOK TOK TOK

YOCHAN'S FINALLY GOT HIS CAST OFF. WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING, *HM?* I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT I NEED THE TWO OF YOU TO BEHAVE YOURSELVES AND MAKE UP.

IT'S LIKE A WAKE IN HERE. CAN YOU ALL CHEER UP?

WHAT ON EARTH IS THE MATTER?

N-NO, AUNTIE. *HA HA HA...*

YOCHAN, CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REASON FOR IT?

THINGS HAVE BEEN STRANGE SINCE SUMMER, BUT ALL THE MORE SO THIS LAST MONTH.

URP!

OH MY! WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU FEELING POORLY AGAIN?

HNGH! HRRRK!

IT LOOKS LIKE I'M IN THE FAMILY WAY.

YOCHAN, I...

...

CERTAINLY! CONGRATU-LATIONS... WHAT A BLESSING!

WE'LL HAVE A BEAUTIFUL BABY!

OH... YES...

YOCHAN... IT'S ALL RIGHT, YES? FOR ME TO HAVE IT?

I WON'T ALLOW IT!

I'M SO HAPPY!

REALLY ?!

AAAAAAAAH!!

WE'LL DIE TOGETHER.

YOCHAN ...

SHPLRK

URP!

YOCHAN. IT'S YOUR BABY.

I-I'M SO HAPPY. ME TOO...

PANT PANT

HRRK!

UNH!

HNGH!

After that, she simply waited single-mindedly for the baby to be born.

...her motive for killing Sister or who the father of the baby inside her was.

At the police inquiry, Setchan absolutely refused to reveal...

It seemed that Auntie had an idea that I was the father.

YOU COME TOO, YOCHAN.

And then, when she heard Setchan had given birth in the police hospital nine months later, Auntie went to pick up the baby.

W A A A H

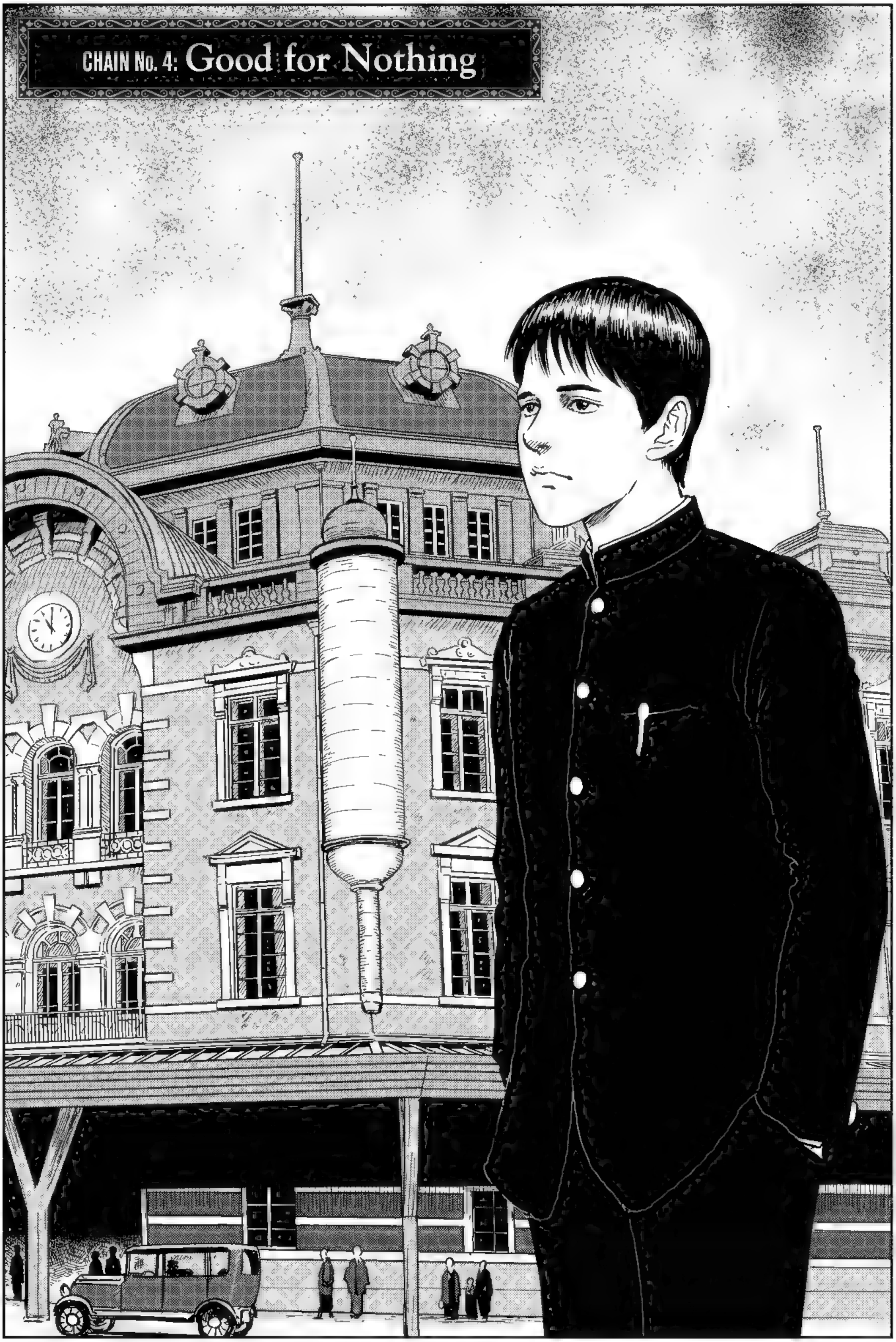
W A A A H

W A A A H

HE WAS A BIT EARLY, BUT HE'S A HEALTHY BABY BOY.

WAAA

CHAIN No. 4: Good for Nothing



Not long afterward I went up to Tokyo.

I immediately began life in a dormitory, but...

...I left for Tokyo as though fleeing my relatives' home.

月影寮

*Tsukikage Dormitory

So instead of going on to my last year in high school...

On my father's orders, I took the college entrance exam a year early and passed.

OBA!!

OBA!!

BANG

WHERE ARE YOU?!

WHOMP

WASH THESE RIGHT NOW, FIRST-YEAR!

OBA! WHAT'RE YOU DOING HIDING AND READING A BOOK?!

...!!

PLEASE HELP ME! DON'T DO THIS TO ME!

AAAH! I'M DROWN-ING!

I CAN'T BREATHE!

T-
TAKEICHI
...

...ON
PUR-
POSE
...

YOU
DID
IT...

HEY, OBA.
GOOD JOB.
WATER
MUST BE
PRETTY
COLD.

RUB
SCRUB
RUB
SCRUB

...NO, NOT
AT ALL,
SIRS. I AM
PERFECTLY
FINE! I'VE
GOT THIS
WASHBOARD
WITH ME.

HOW ABOUT IT? WANNA BE OUR BOY?

B-BUT MY HEART IS PITCH-BLACK.

WHAT ?

UMM ...

YOUR BOTTOM'S PRETTY SOFT TOO.

OBA, YOU REALLY ARE SO FAIR-SKINNED, SO CUTE.

O-OH, YOUUUU!! JUST STOP THAAAAAT!!

...

YOCHAN ...

YO-
CHAAAAAN.

YOCHAAAAAN,
I WOULD HAVE
DONE THE
LAUNDRYYYYY.

...and went to live in my father's town house in Ueno.

Unable to endure dormitory life, I got the doctor to certify that my lungs were affected. I left the dormitory...

S-SISTER...

PLEASE FIND PEACE...

MASTER YOZO, YOUR FATHER HAS ARRIVED IN TOKYO.

WHAT?!

SO THEN, HOW AM I GOING TO KILL SOME TIME?

WON'T DO ANY GOOD TO HEAD TO SCHOOL NOW.

LESSONS START IN THE AFTER-NOON TODAY.

WHAT'S THIS, YOZO? NO SCHOOL TODAY?

I'M JUST ON MY WAY.

When I walked down the roads, I felt as though each and every person I passed was staring at me in rebuke. It was terrifying.

Try as I might to kill time, I most certainly could not walk about the city of Tokyo on my own.

PERHAPS I'LL GO TO THE ART SCHOOL IN SENDAGI TODAY...

I was afraid to go into a restaurant because of the waiters.

I was afraid to go into the department stores because of the salesgirls ...

I was afraid to board a streetcar because of the conductor.

CAN YOU LEND ME FIVE YEN?

YOU.

YOU'RE MY GUEST!

THAT'S FINE! NOW FOR SOME LIQUOR!

FLUSTERED

...

カフェー松平

CAFE MATSUDAIRA

THERE! THAT BASHFUL SMILE.

THAT'S THE SPECIAL MARK OF A PROMISING ARTIST.

I'VE BEEN NOTICING YOU FOR QUITE A WHILE.

I'M SORRY TO SAY IT, BUT EVER SINCE HE APPEARED IN OUR ART CLASS, I'VE ONLY BEEN THE SECOND HANDSOMEST.

ISN'T HE A HANDSOME BOY, KINU? YOU MUSTN'T FALL FOR HIM, NOW.

GOODNESS! WHAT A HEARTY DRINKER YOU ARE!

PWAH!

GULP

NOW! DRINK, DRINK, PRETTY BOY!

THE TEACHERS WHO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN NATURE! THE TEACHERS WHO SHOW PROFOUND SYMPATHY FOR NATURE!

DON'T BE SILLY. THEY'RE USELESS.

I'VE BEEN THINKING I'D LIKE TO ENTER A REAL ART SCHOOL...

HORIKI... WAS IT, YES?

朱雀美人座

パチンコ

ゲイコクビル

大門

カフェー大

サービス

I felt not the least respect for his opinions.

But I thought, "He might be a good person for me to go out with."

OH, YOU! WHAT A TERRIBLE PUN, HORIKI! *HA HA HA!*

RIGHT. KINU, HOW ABOUT IT? LET'S PUT THE PROFOUND IN THAT SYMPATHY TONIGHT!

In this man, I saw a genuine city good-for-nothing.

Masao Horiki...

I HEAR YOU.

HA HA HA!

PLUS, DENKI BRAN'S NUMBER ONE AT GETTING YOU DRUNK FAST. I GUARANTEE YOU THAT.

SO? PRETTY GOOD, RIGHT? FOOD STAND BEEF BOWL AND YAKITORI—THERE'S NOTHING MORE NUTRITIOUS AND CHEAP.

SMOKE?

AFTER THAT, I'LL HAVE A LITTLE DRINK WITH SOME BOILED TOFU. FOR HOW CHEAP IT IS, IT FEELS PRETTY DECADENT.

ON MY WAY HOME FROM A PROSTITUTE'S IN THE MORNING, I'LL STOP BY THIS RESTAURANT YAYOI, AND THEN TAKE A BATH, SEE?

Prostitutes could do much the same...

I soon came to understand that drink and tobacco were excellent means of dissipating (even for a few moments) my dread of human beings.

PWEEH

FWOO

WHAT?

WE'RE GOING TO YOSHIWARA!!

WHAT OF IT, HORIKI?

色だん

THERE'S STILL 30 YEN IN THIS WALLET YOU LEFT ME TO HOLD ON TO.

WE'RE PUTTING THE "POW" IN PASSION TONIGHT.

浅草海苔

PERFECT!! ABSOLUTELY PERFECT.

YOU NEVER BEEN BEFORE?

GRIN

...

DO COME IN!

HEY! IT'S HIS FIRST TIME. TREAT HIM RIGHT, WILL YOU?
OH MY. PLEASE DO ENJOY YOURSELF, HM?

LET ME GET A CLOSER LOOK AT YOU.

YOU'RE SO HANDSOME, SIR.

BUT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW.

SO YOU SAW A GHOST, *HM?* POOR DEAR...

WHAT'S THE MATTER ?

YOU'RE SHAKING.

DID YOU PERHAPS SEE A GHOST?

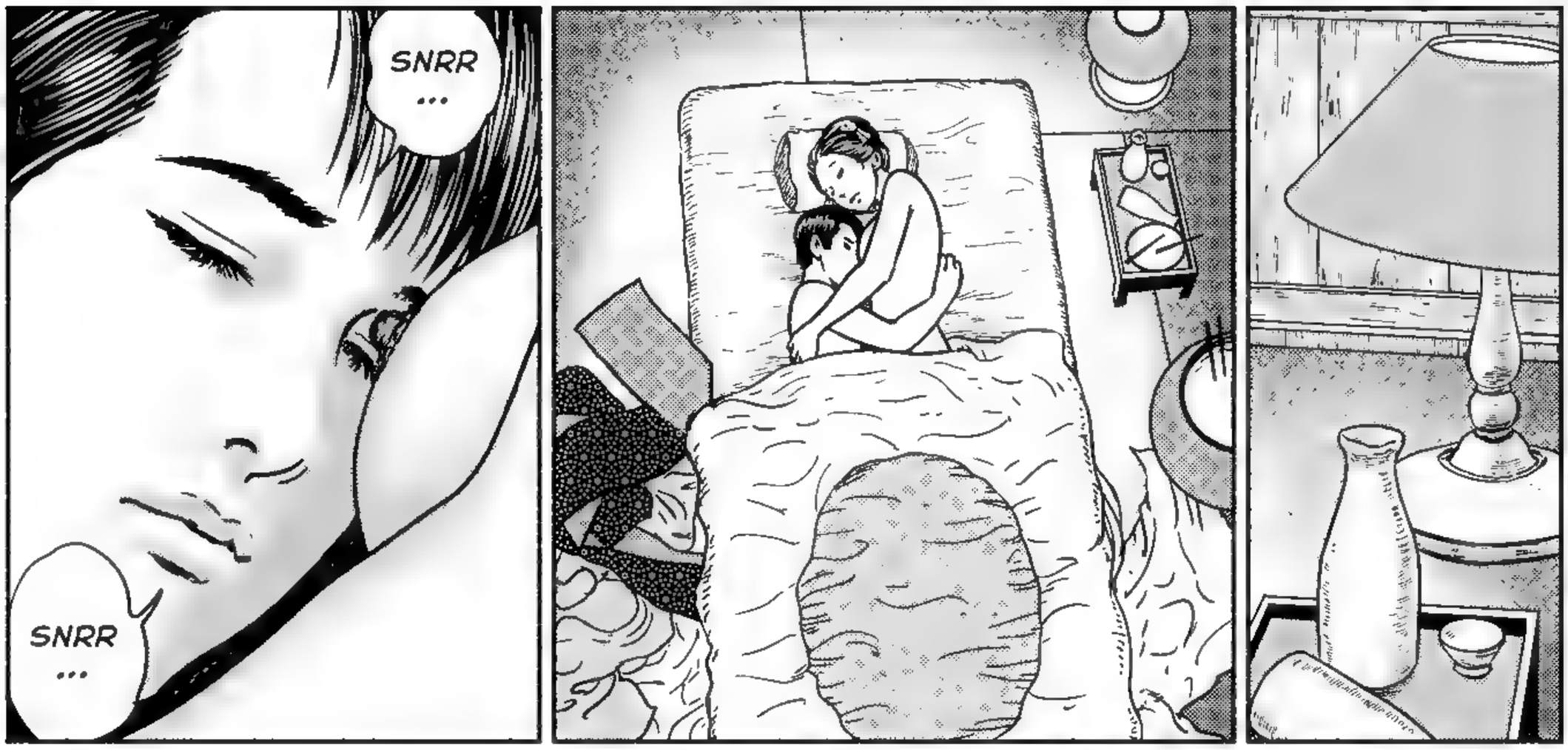
...

NOW. COME HERE. YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID OF GHOSTS.

如是我聞
一時佛在
舍衛國
祇樹給獨獨園
與大比丘衆
千二百五十人俱
皆是大阿羅漢
衆所知識
長老舍利弗
摩訶目犍連
摩訶迦葉
摩訶迦旃延
摩訶俱絺羅
離婆多
周利槃陀伽
難陀
阿難陀
羅睺羅
憍梵波提
賓頭盧頗羅墮

...Ānanda, Rāhula, Gavāmpati, Piṇḍolabhāradvāja.

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was dwelling in the Jeta Grove of Anāthapiṇḍada's park, along with a great saāgha of twelve hundred and fifty bhikṣus. All were great arhats well known to the assembly. Among them were Elder Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, Mahākauṣṭhila, Revata, Śuddhipanthakena, Nanda...



But that night, I felt utterly safe and slept as though in a bog, dreamless.

I had lived in fear of human beings and been tortured by ghosts of the dead.

THE ODOR OF A "LADY-KILLER" HAS ALREADY PERMEATED YOU.

THE SEVEREST APPRENTICESHIP IN WOMEN IS WITH PROSTITUTES, AND THAT MAKES IT THE MOST EFFECTIVE.

WHAT?

LATELY, YOU'VE SEEMED RIGHT AT HOME IN THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT.

THINK ABOUT IT. THE LADIES HAVE BEEN CRAWLING AROUND YOU LATELY, HAVEN'T THEY?

こばた

WOMEN INSTINCTIVELY DETECT THIS AND FLOCK TO IT.

*Tobacco

HEH...

AN OBSCENE AND INDECENT AIR ALREADY CLINGS TO YOU.

THIS AIR THAT SOMEHOW PUTS DREAMS IN THE HEADS OF WOMEN...

IMPOSSI-
BLE...

...

YOU'RE GOING ALREADY?

OH, HEY...

...when was it that I acquired this certain offensive atmosphere which clung inseparably to me?

As I went to them to escape from my dread of human beings, to seek a mere night of repose...

An obscene and indecent air...

...a karma this body had been furnished with all along.

But it felt to me...

CHAIN No. 5: Outcast

I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE INTERESTING.

BUT THOSE AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS IN THIS WORLD, YOU KNOW.

NOW THEN, OBA. YOU MIGHT HAVE HAD A TASTE OF DRINK AND WOMEN, AND NOW YOU'RE FULL.

丸山家具

HERE WE ARE.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHO THEY ARE. YOU SEE A STRANGER, YOU ASSUME HE'S A SPY.

LISTEN. WATCH OUT FOR POLICE. AND SNITCHES, TOO.

KLAK

PLEASE EXCUSE MY DEAR AUNT SALLY.

KNOCK KNOCK

HURRY INSIDE.

TO MAKE UP FOR IT, I BROUGHT A NEW COMRADE. THIS IS OBA.

AAH, I'VE BEEN PRETTY BUSY.

YOU NEVER COME TO THE STUDY MEETINGS.

OH, HORIKI. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

KREEEEE

KACHAK

?!

...

INSECTS ?!

...

プロレタリア革命

*Proletariat Revolution

A-ALL RIGHT.

WE ARE BRETHREN BOUND TO EACH OTHER BY MARX. YOU SAID YOUR NAME IS OBA, YES? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A LECTURE ON MARXIAN ECONOMICS. BUY A PAMPHLET AND TAKE A SEAT.

WHAT'S WRONG, OBA?

IT'S NOTH-ING.

O-OH...

...HUMAN SOCIETY CHANGES ACCORDING TO THESE LAWS.

WHILE PRESCRIBED BY MATERIALISTIC ASPECTS SUCH AS ECONOMICS ...

ACCORDING TO HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, THERE EXIST OBJECTIVE LAWS IN HUMAN SOCIETY JUST AS IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES.

MARX BELIEVED THAT HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS WAS BORN FROM PHYSICAL FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY.

*Marx

My heart was totally unmoved.

But I felt that there was something inexplicable at the bottom of human society which was not reducible to economics.

プロレタリア

Everything in the lecture seemed exceedingly obvious.

YES! WE WILL FIGHT!!

OUR ACTIVITIES ARE CURRENTLY DEEMED ILLEGAL, AND WE FACE UNJUSTIFIED OPPRESSION.

HUMANITY MUST FINALLY OBTAIN TRUE EQUALITY, WITH NO CLASSES.

BUT WE WILL WORK HARD TOWARD THE UTOPIA THAT WILL EVENTUALLY COME, WILL WE NOT?!

But I was not their comrade.

I was deceiving them completely.

...I gradually came to be quite popular.

Perhaps because I put these "comrades" and their tense faces at ease with my usual antics...

Nevertheless, I attended every meeting from then on.

At times, they really did look to me like insects, and at those times, I felt even more at ease.

Because the most dreadful thing in the world for me was human beings.

Illegality. I found the thought faintly pleasurable.

Social outcasts... Criminal consciousness... The wound of a guilty conscience... These words were curiously soothing to me.

UNDER-STOOD, KAMIYAMA!

I felt that if I should become a party member and get caught, not even the prospect of life in prison would bother me.

I worked diligently at these "jobs."

OBA, I GOT A JOB FOR YOU! GO PUT UP POSTERS.

MATAGI'LL GO WITH YOU. SHE'LL SHOW YOU THE ROPES.

UNDER-STOOD!

AND DON'T STAY IN ONE PLACE LONGER THAN ONE MINUTE.

THE BEST THING? NOT TO LOOK AROUND TOO MUCH. IT'S SUSPICIOUS.

...than groaning away my sleepless nights in a hellish dread of human beings.

It occurred to me that prison life might actually be pleasanter...

PLAP

OF COURSE !!

Y- YES.

IT SEEMS THAT THERE ARE EVER MORE REDS IN THE SCHOOLS THESE DAYS. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

YOZO, ARE YOU PUTTING FORTH YOUR BEST EFFORTS AT SCHOOL?

OF COURSE, FATHER.

I'VE FOUND YOU LODGINGS AT A PLACE CALLED SEN-YUKAN IN HONGO.

IT'S A BIT OLD, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO.

I'M NOT PLANNING TO STAND FOR ELECTION AGAIN, SO I'VE DECIDED TO SELL THIS HOUSE.

MY TERM OF OFFICE AT THE DIET'S NEARLY OVER.

INCIDEN-TALLY...

YOU ARE... WELL, GOOD THEN.

Now I suddenly had to make ends meet on the allowance doled out each month from home.

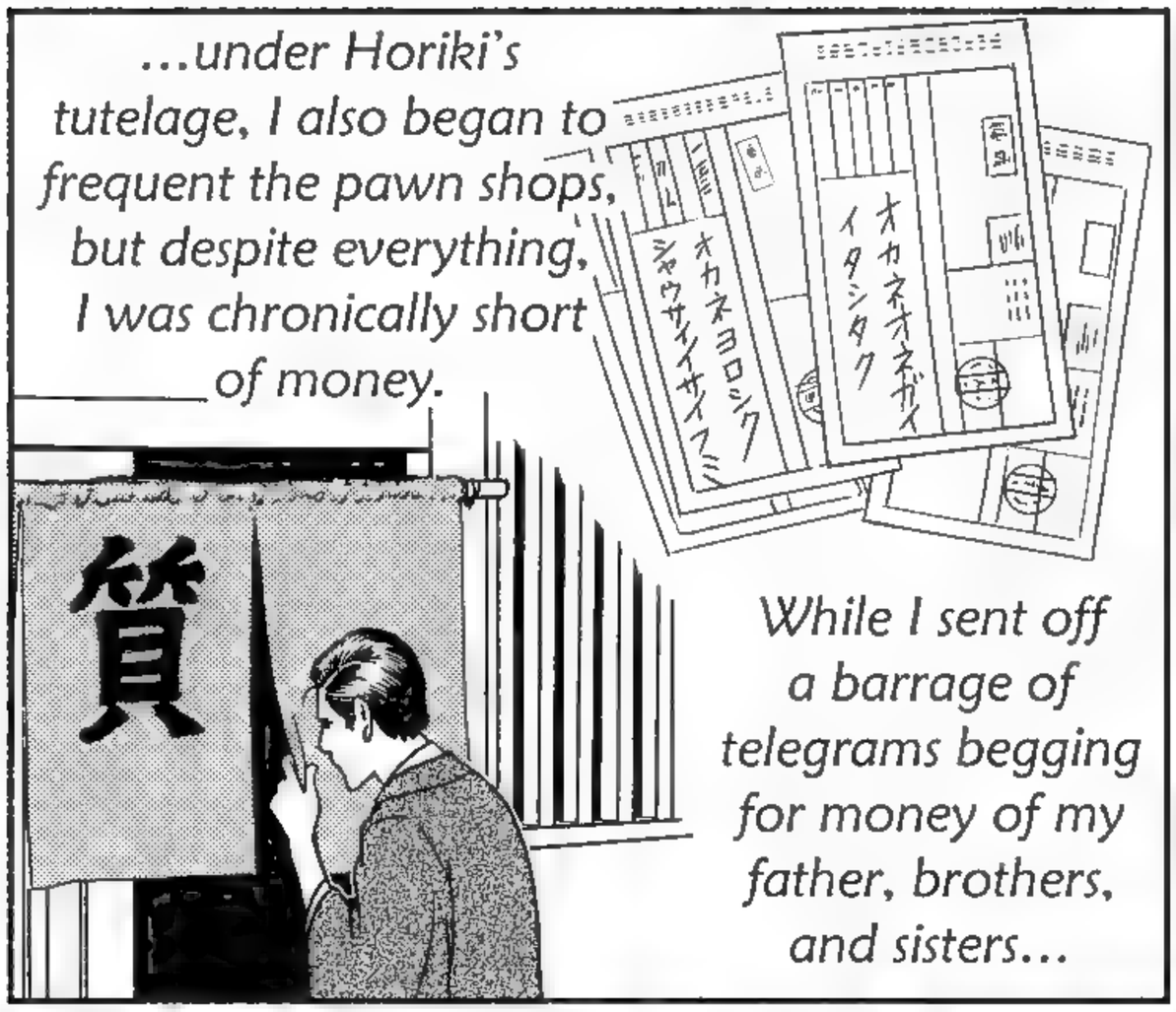
I was quite at my wits' end.

The allowance my father had been giving me would disappear in two or three days' time, but there had always been cigarettes and food at the house.

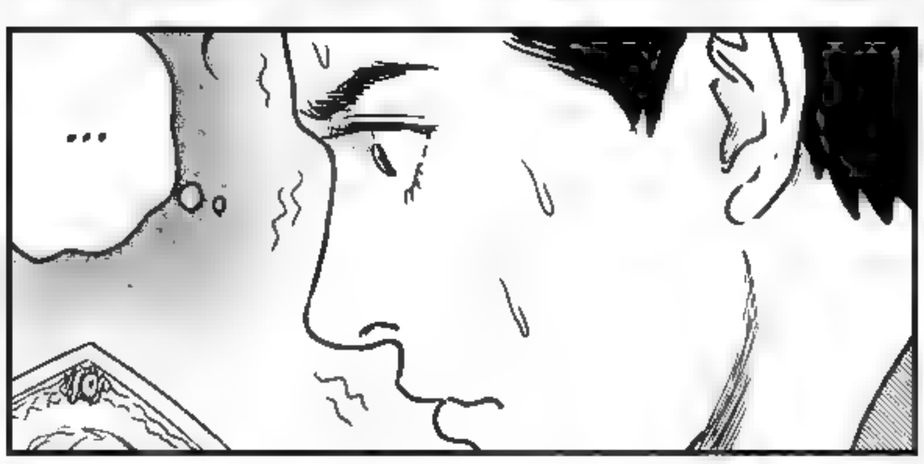
And anything I needed could be charged at one of the shops my father patronized.

*Sen-yukan

...under Horiki's tutelage, I also began to frequent the pawn shops, but despite everything, I was chronically short of money.



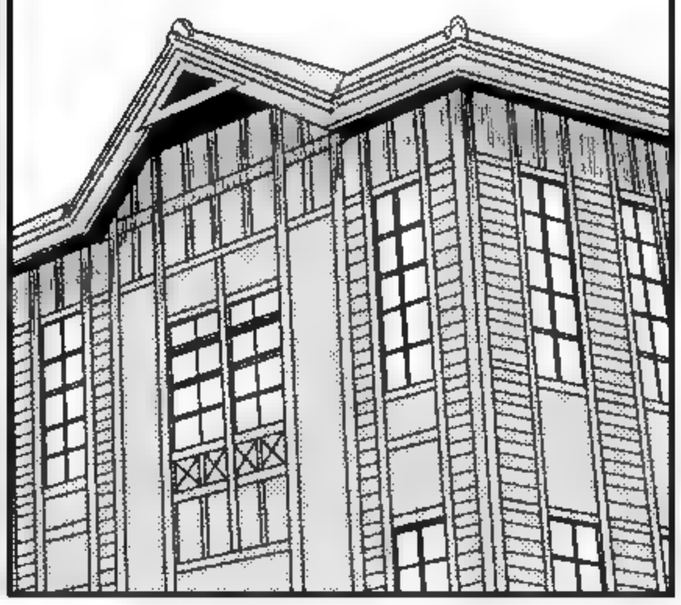
While I sent off a barrage of telegrams begging for money of my father, brothers, and sisters...



...was so frequent and frenetic that I could no longer perform them half in the spirit of fun.

And above all else, my work for the movement...

At school as well, things got to the point where my absences were too great to go unnoticed.



I'M AN EXPERT IN THOSE ONES. YOU NEED TO JOIN ME MORE, TOO.

BUT I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING. MARXISTS SHOULD STUDY NOT ONLY PRODUCTION BUT CONSUMPTION.

OBA, IS IT TRUE YOU'RE THE LEADER OF THE ACTION GROUPS IN CENTRAL TOKYO NOW?

KNOWING YOU, I BET YOU JUST COULDN'T SAY NO.

*Taishu Barr/oden

HAVING FUN, *HM*?

TO WIT, I AM GIVING THIS DRINK ITS TRANSACTIONAL VALUE OF 50 SEN.

H-HOW SURPRISING, NAEKO MATAGI. I AM FIGHTING THE CLASS WAR IN MY OWN WAY.

KAMIYAMA'S LOST ALL HOPE IN YOU.

HORIKI, YOU'RE NEVER AT THE MEETINGS.

OBA... I HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS.

ENOUGH SMALL TALK.

SHH!! WE RISE UP ON MAY DAY.

AN ARMED UPRISING?!

WHAT ?!

笑

AND I ALSO WANTED TO ASK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION.

I WANT YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH BRANCHES IN HONGO, KOISHIKAWA, SHITAYA AND KANDA WITH THE MESSAGE TO PREPARE FOR A GENERAL UPRISING.

WE'LL CHARGE INTO THE MAY DAY PROTESTS, AGITATE THE PROTESTERS, AND SET FIRE TO THE DIET.

I'M SORRY, NAEKO. I'M A BIT SKINT AT THE MOMENT.

OH, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

GOOD-NESS...

OPEN IT.

I BOUGHT IT FOR YOU.

WHAT IS THIS?

NAEKO.

HERE, OBA.

OH, THANK YOU! WHAT A WONDERFUL ASHTRAY.

I WON-DER WHAT IT IS.

OOOH! HOW KIND!

I WISH YOU WOULD THINK OF ME AS YOUR REAL SISTER.

OBA.

YOU MAKE ME SO HAPPY.

I DO.

Her presents were without exception in extraordinarily bad taste...

...and I was at a loss.

...and bought me presents, seemingly at random.

From then on, she doggedly tagged along after the day's job...

HOW THOUGHT-FUL.

OOH, THIS TIME, IT'S A WONDERFUL EAR PICK.

...AND HIT IT WITH A GLASS ASHTRAY. TROUNCED HIM.

HE STUCK IT IN HIS EAR...

THAT'S DREADFUL! HOW DID HE DO IT?

I HEARD THAT A MAN KILLED SOMEONE WITH AN EAR PICK LIKE THIS.

I'LL STRIKE A BLOW AGAINST THOSE DOGS, THE POLICE.

DURING THE UPRISING, I'LL USE THIS AS A WEAPON.

THAT'S SO SCARY ...

AH, RIGHT!

?

HO HO HO...

OH, DON'T! HONESTLY, OBA!!

HO HO...

YOU AWFUL MAN!

AWFUL ...

...!!

I MEAN, KILLING A PERSON WITH A GIFT FROM A WOMAN!

YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY TACTLESS.

AH...

AAAAH...

TAKE ME!

TAKE MEEEEE!!

TAXIIIII!

東邦生命

*Toho Insurance

OOOH!!

CREAK

AAAH!!

SKRTCH

SKRTCH

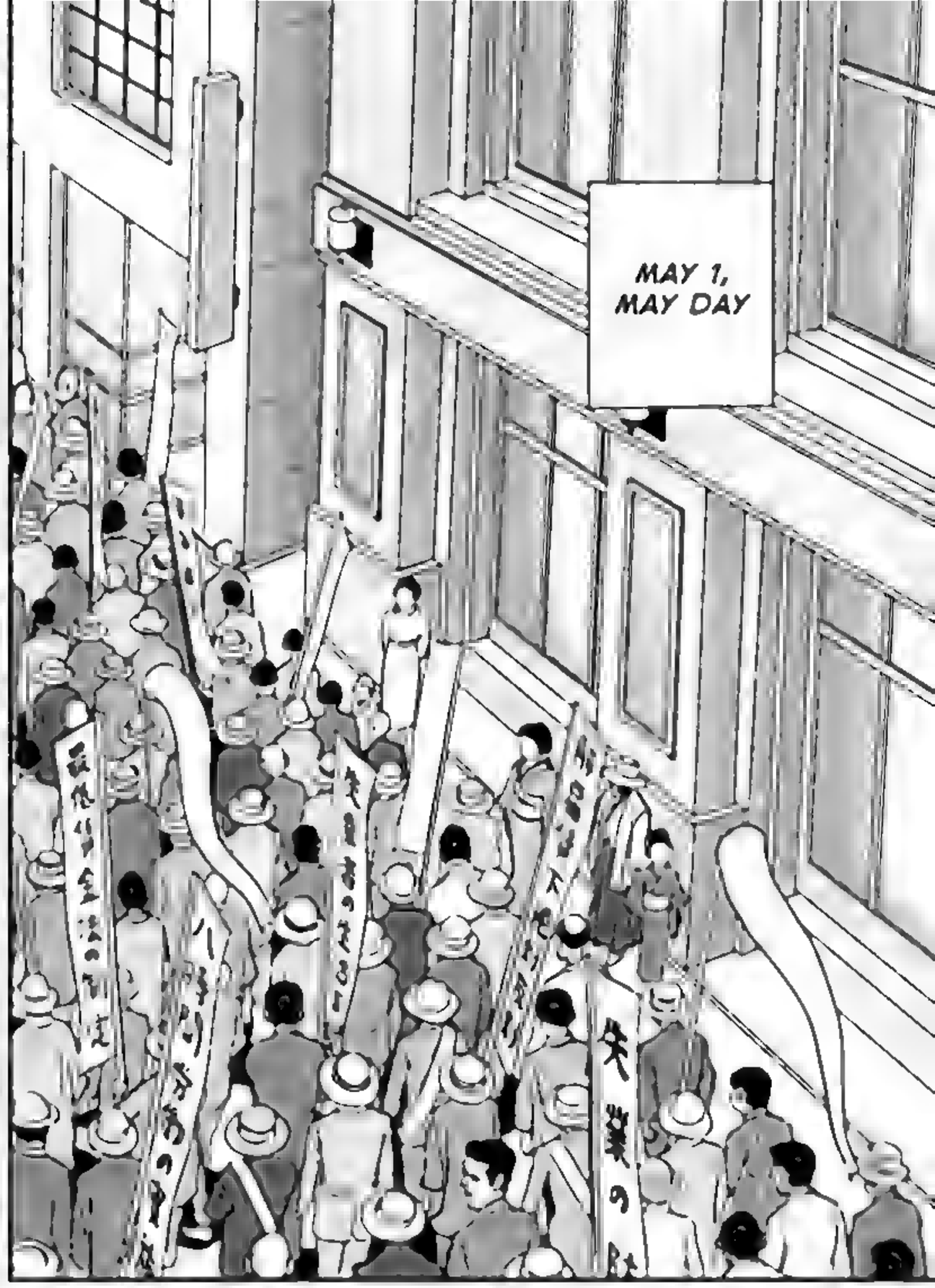
NGAAH !!

WHAT AN EXTRAOR-DINARY SISTER I HAVE...

HON-ESTLY ...

UNH!

*Please Prevent Unemployment
*Pay Early (EB) *Pay Unemployment
Welfare for the Unemployed
An Eight-Hour Workday
Minimum Wage Laws



SHAKE
SHAKE
CH-
CH...
CH...
SHAKE
SHAKE
CHIEF! INSTRUC-TIONS!
THD
THD
THD
THD
CHIEF !!
WHAT?!
CH-
CHARGE !!

!!

THEY'VE BLOCKED US IN!!

AH!!

RETREAT !!

RE-TREAT !!

R-

AAAH !!

CHIEF!!

AAAAAAAAH!!

AAAAAAH!!

EEP!

WORKERS, UNITE!!

CHIEF!!

NOTHING TO DO BUT FIGHT TO THE DEATH!

HELP!!

OBA!!

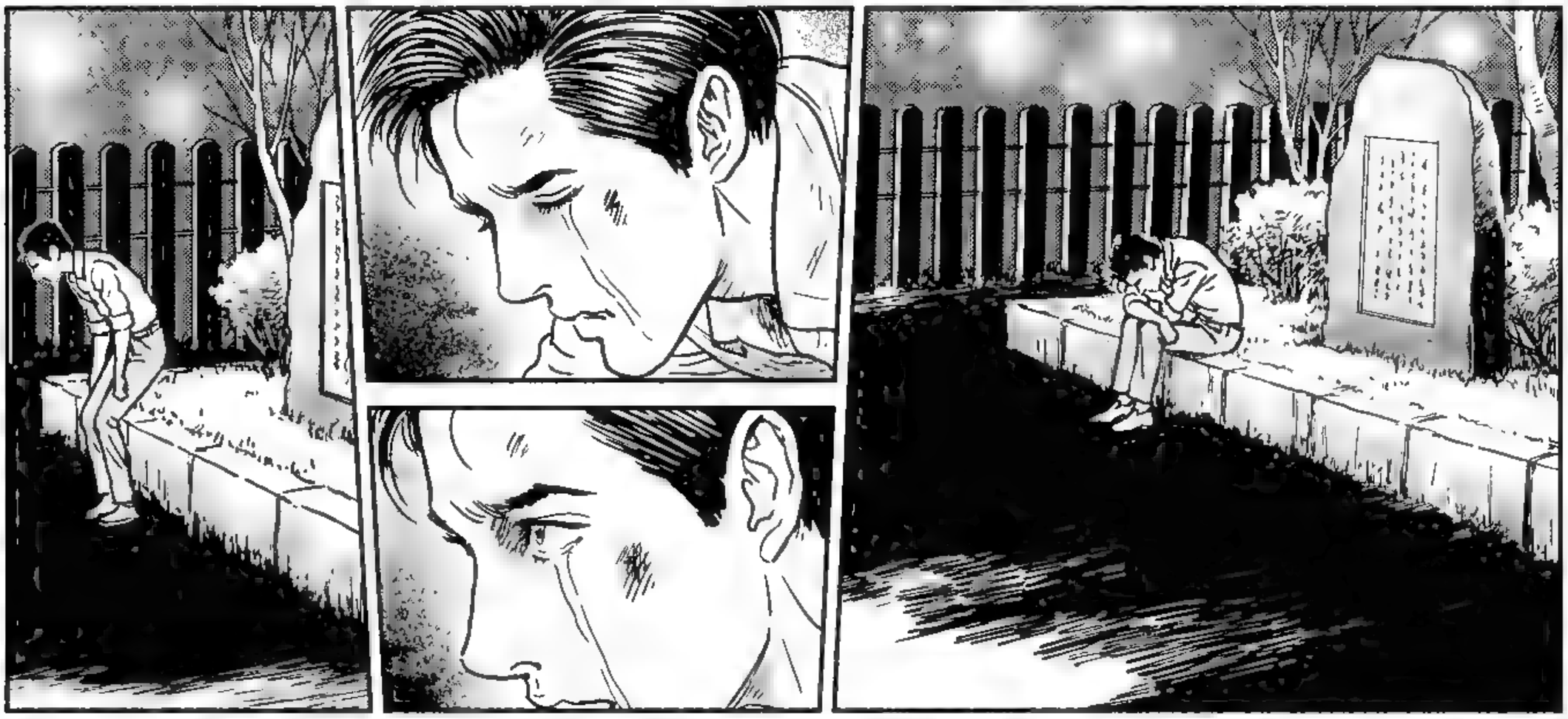
?!

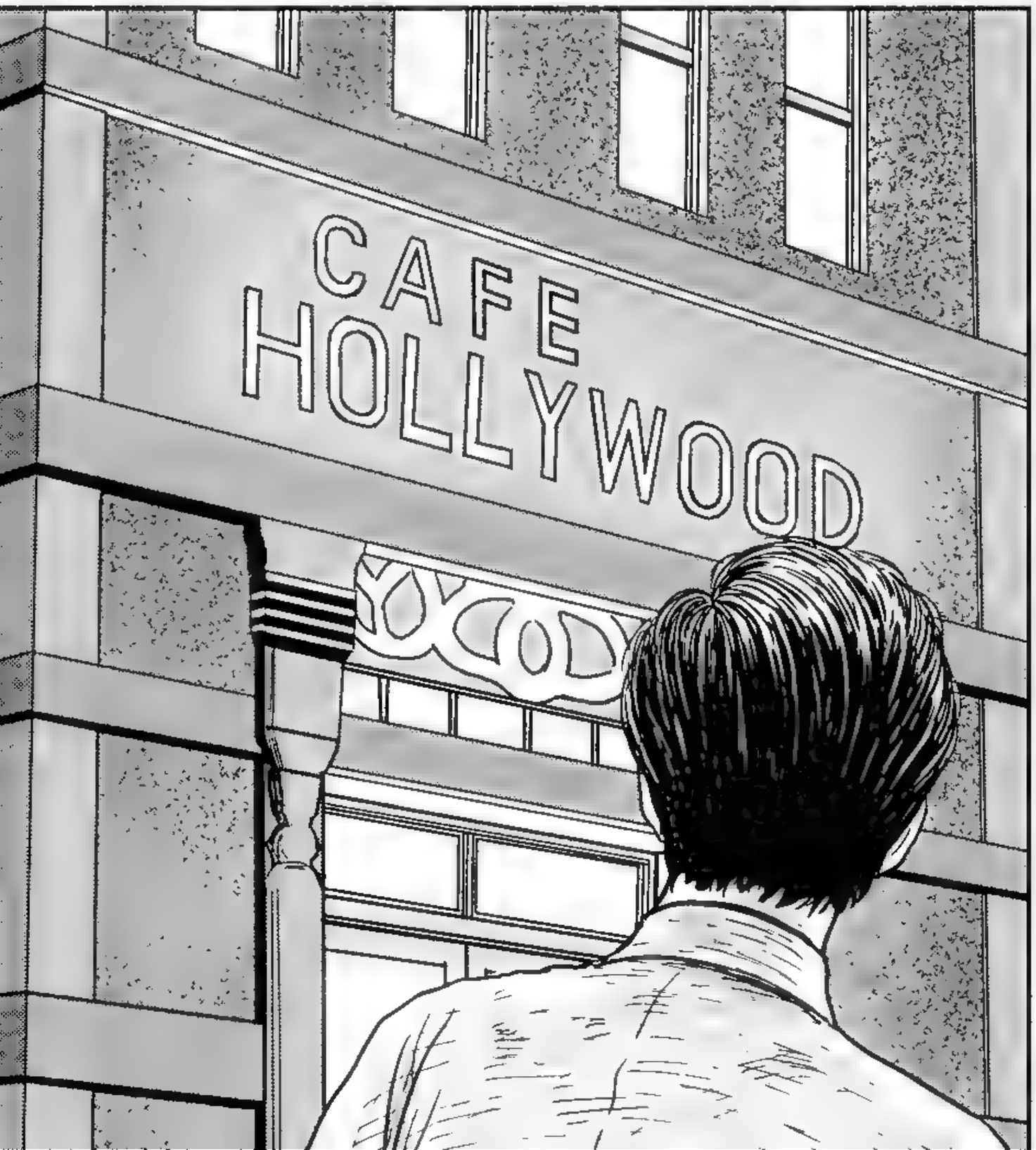
GRAB

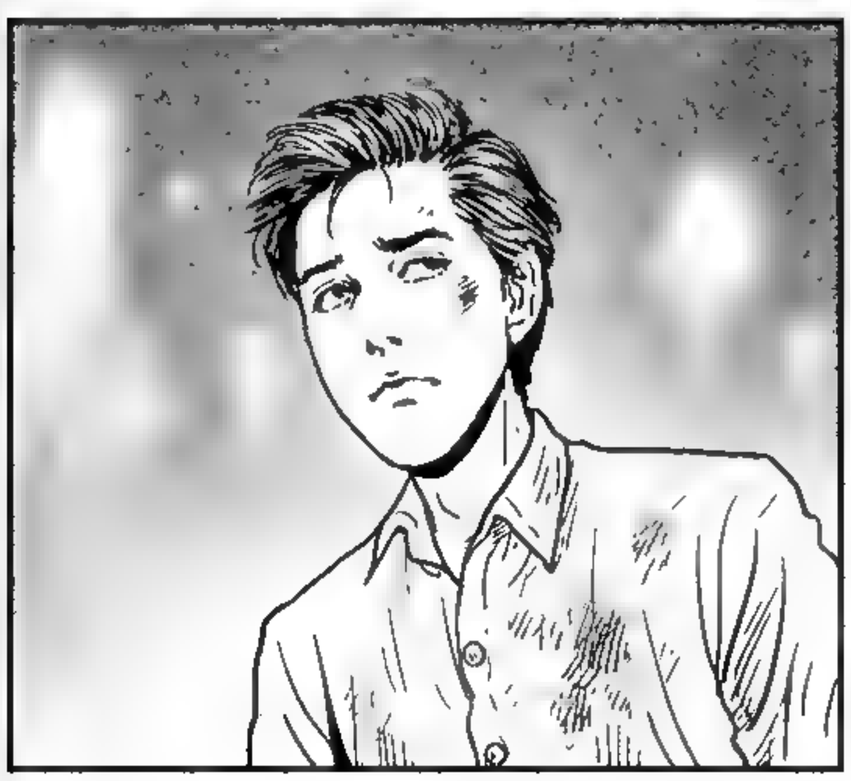
KICK

KICK

AAAH !!




CAFE
HOLLYWOOD



CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

GOOD EVENING.

THUD

CONSIDER YOURSELF WARNED...

ALL I'VE GOT IS TEN YEN...

YOU NEEDN'T WORRY.

YOU'RE BLEEDING.

GOODNESS, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?

CHAIN No. 6: Tsuneko

But I couldn't escape.

I wished to run from the world.

FSH
FSH
FSH
FSH

ZSH
ZSH
ZSH

Money, women, school, leftist movements... All of these troubles had taken my feet from under me, and I was unable to move.

...I would not be able to break free of this antlion pit.

I supposed that as long as I was alive...

ZSH
ZSH
FSH
FSH
FSH

ZSH
ZSH
ZSH
FSH
FSH
GRAB
FSH
FSH
NGAAAH
!!
YOU
TRAITOR
!!
FSH
FSH
OBA
!!

...

AAAH!!

I'M AT A CAFÉ ...

I WAS?

...WERE YOU THERE THE WHOLE TIME?

YOU MUST'VE BEEN PRETTY TIRED.

YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS.

WHERE AM I?

I'M TSUNEKO. NICE TO MEET YOU.

ONLY LIQUOR? I'LL HAVE A DRINK TOO.

YES... HELP YOURSELF.

寿し

I RENT THE SECOND FLOOR HERE.

屋畑小店商吉大

ソリン

SORRY FOR THE WAIT.

*Lucky Store Obata ya

HOW 'BOUT ANOTHER DRINK?

NOW.

HERE.

YOU'RE 21? SO I'M TWO YEARS OLDER.

...AND NOW HE'S IN PRISON.

MY HUSBAND COULDN'T FIND A DECENT JOB, AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW HE WAS PICKED UP FOR SWINDLING SOMEONE...

BUT WE RAN AWAY TO TOKYO TOGETHER LAST SPRING.

I'VE GOT A HUSBAND, YOU KNOW. HE USED TO BE A BARBER IN HIROSHIMA.

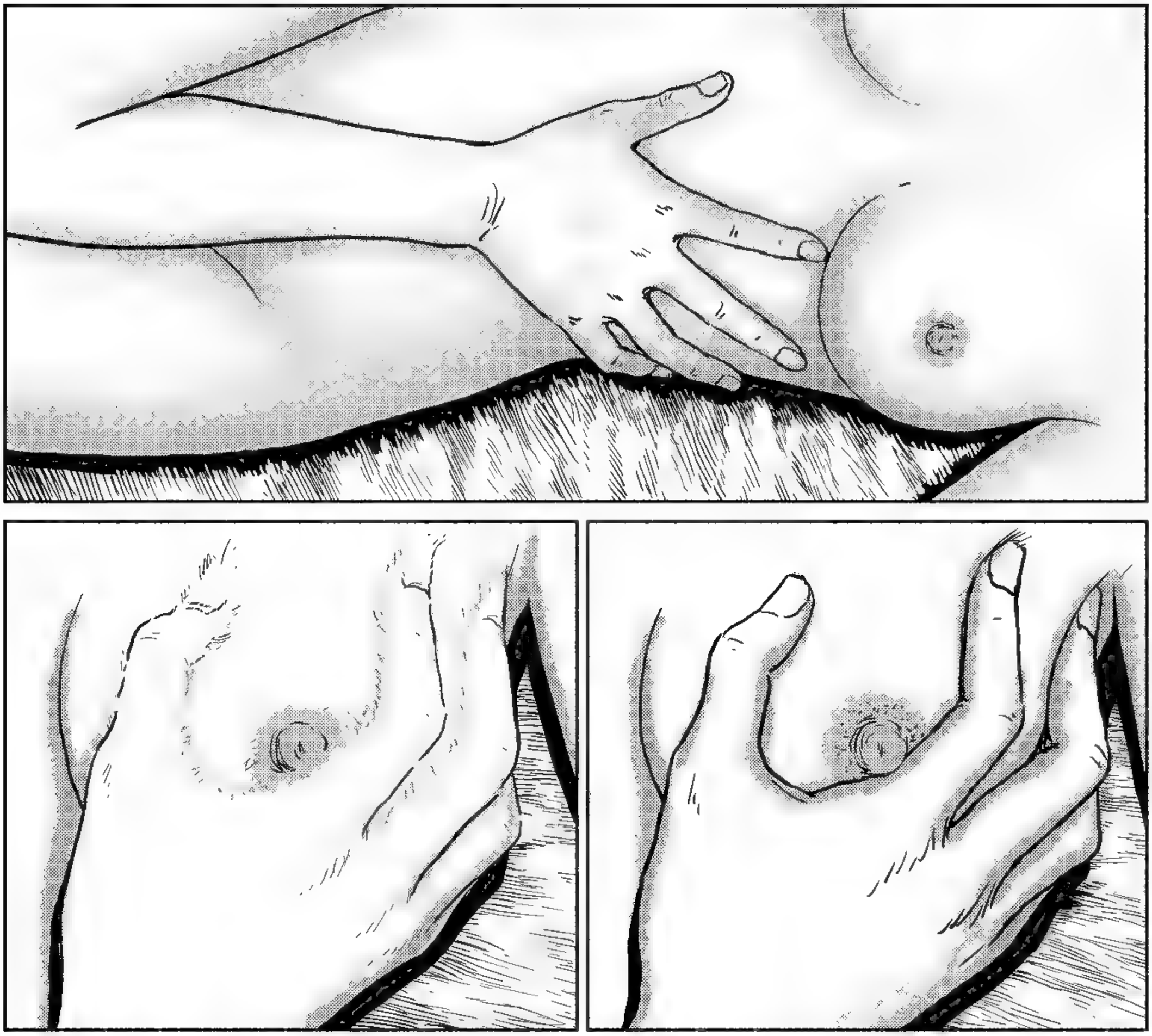
...EVERY DAY...

I'VE BEEN GOING TO THE PRISON...

NO.

JUST NOW... DID YOU SAY YOU'RE UNHAPPY?

HYOOOOO



Her silent current of misery enveloped me and mingled with my own current of gloom.

That night, I completely freed myself from fear and uneasiness.

But...

...it lasted only one night.

It was entirely different from the feeling of sleeping soundly I had experienced with prostitutes.

The night I spent with the criminal's wife was the very first night of my life I had tasted happiness.

FWMP

In the morning,
I was again
the shallow,
fearful clown.

大吉商店小畑屋

WELL, YOU KNOW, "THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM" AND ALL!

HA HA HA... HEY, YOU!

YOU'RE ALREADY AWAKE?

WHAT?

They can harm themselves on cotton wool.

The weak fear happiness itself.

I was impatient to leave her before I was wounded by happiness.

BUT YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE PRISON, DON'T YOU?

AH! ARE YOU LEAVING ALREADY? YOU COULD STAY, TAKE YOUR TIME.

SO YOU CAN RELAX. STAY.

I'M NOT GOING TO THE PRISON ANYMORE.

OH, RIGHT.

THEY ALSO SAY LOVE FLIES OUT THE WINDOW WHEN POVERTY COMES IN THE DOOR.

SNAP

ZNK

A BIRD IN THE HAND'S WORTH TWO IN THE BUSH, AS THEY SAY.

I CAN'T JUST SIT BACK ON MY HEELS.

OH, ABOUT THAT... A HANDSOME FELLOW LIKE MYSELF, MONEY AND POWER'S THE REAL THING.

THAT'S ACCORDING TO THE KANAZAWA DICTIONARY ...

FINALLY, IN DESPERATION, HE SHAKES OFF THE WOMAN.

WHEN HE RUNS OUT OF MONEY, HE NATURALLY IS IN THE DUMPS. HE'S NO GOOD FOR ANYTHING. HE BECOMES STRANGELY SOURED.

MORE'S THE PITY...

IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT WHEN A MAN'S MONEY RUNS OUT HE'S SHAKEN OFF BY WOMEN.

PEOPLE GENERALLY GET THE SENSE OF THAT BACKWARD, YOU KNOW?

...and dangerous...

To stay any longer was useless...

PFFT!

It frightened me that I had accepted even a moment's kindness. I felt I had imposed horrible bonds on myself.

I didn't see Tsuneko for a while after that. My happiness grew fainter with every day that went by.

ANOTHER TERRIBLE DREAM...

HAAH...

HAAH...

LEAP

AAAAH!

UUNH.

UNH...

OH! THE LANDLADY. YES?

MR. OBA. MR. OBA?

GUESTS?

AT THIS HOUR?

YOU HAVE GUESTS WAITING AT THE DOOR.

!!

IF IT ISN'T KAMIYAMA AND NAEKO...

W-WHY!

WE WERE WORRIED.

OBA, IF YOU WERE SAFE, WHY DIDN'T YOU CONTACT US?

My comrades from the illegal movement had indeed come to see me.

Kamiyama and Naeko Matagi...!

YES. ALTHOUGH THAT'S FOR APPEAR-ANCES ONLY.

NAEKO MATAGI HERE WAS ARRESTED AND ONLY RELEASED THE OTHER DAY ON THE CONDITION OF BREAKING WITH ANY ILLEGAL MOVEMENT.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, OBA?

WE THOUGHT OUR PLAN WAS PERFECT! AND YET THE POLICE GOT WORD OF IT.

OBA. I REALLY HAVE BEEN WORRIED ABOUT WHERE YOU GOT OFF TO.

WHAT ?

...

A SPY?!

...

A SPY.

...NO?

N-NO IDEA...

YOU WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT, WOULD YOU?

EXACTLY. I SUSPECT THAT ONE OF OUR COMRADES SNITCHED TO THE POLICE.

I CHARGED FEROCIOUSLY, BUT I GUESS I GOT HIT IN THE HEAD. I HAVE NO MEMORY OF THE DAY.

TH-THAT'S— A-ACTUALLY, I'M ASHAMED.

BY THE WAY, OBA. HOW DID YOU ESCAPE ARREST? WHY YOU, IN THE VANGUARD OF THE SQUAD?

THAT'S QUITE THE UNBELIEVABLE EXCUSE.

KAMI-
YAMA...

...YOU
DO KNOW
WHAT WILL
HAPPEN,
HM?

IF THAT
IS A
LIE...

?!

...THE
TRUTH.

HE'S
ACTU-
ALLY
TELLING
...

I HAVE A
PROPOSAL
ON THAT
SUBJECT,
KAMIYAMA.

I'LL VOUCH
FOR HIS
INNOCENCE.
THE SPY IS
SOMEONE
ELSE.

I'M QUITE SURE
I WITNESSED
HIM BEING HIT
BY AN OFFICER
AND LOSE
CONSCIOUSNESS.

IT WOULD BE TOO HARD ON YOUR OWN. I'LL BE YOUR LIEUTENANT.

THIS IS A CRITICAL JOB.

WE'LL HAVE TO HAVE CLOSER COMMUNICA-TION FROM NOW ON.

A FINE MAN LIKE OBA COULD CERTAINLY GET THE JOB DONE.

PERHAPS YOU COULD HAVE *HIM* FIND THE SPY.

In the name of information exchange and strategizing, she demanded close couplings in a room of that building.

After that, Naeko Matagi called me to her frequently on the pretext of searching for the spy.

...

I'M NOT LETTING YOU GET AWAY AGAIN.

DO YOU KNOW HOW HURT I WAS?!

AAAH, OBA! YOU ARE A TERRIBLE MAN! KICKING ME AND THEN RUNNING AWAY!

YOU'LL PAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

白虎
まつ
串
HIC!
OBA! LET'S GO FOR ONE MORE DRINK!
喜多川
...was the bar at night.
My only escape now...
ちみ
ホルモン
WHEE!
HIC!
WE HAVEN'T ANY MONEY.
BUT, HORIKI.
YOU MEAN A CAFÉ?! LET'S GO!!
DON'T BE SURPRISED AT WHAT YOU SEE. WINE, WOMEN AND SONG...
ALL RIGHT. I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE LAND OF DREAMS.
DON'T BE A WET BLANKET! HAVE ANOTHER ONE!
CAFE HOLLYWOOD
THANKS!
ALL RIGHT, I'M GOING TO KISS HER. I'M GOING TO KISS WHICHEVER HOSTESS SITS NEXT TO ME!!
I'M STARVED FOR A WOMAN TONIGHT! IS IT ALL RIGHT TO KISS THE HOSTESS?!
IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE, I SUPPOSE.

HA HA HA HA!

CHATTER

CHATTER

SMIRK

GRIN

YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT, TELL HIM!! HE GAVE ME PERMISSION.

TSUNEKO, WAS IT? I'M GOING TO KISS YOU TONIGHT, SO BRACE YOURSELF.

?!

FWP

I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

NOT EVEN A LECHER LIKE MYSELF CAN KISS A WOMAN WHO LOOKS SO POVERTY-STRICKEN.

I... HAVEN'T GOT ANY MONEY.

TSU-NEKO. SOME LIQUOR ...

ALL RIGHT.

...

I drank until I drowned in it.

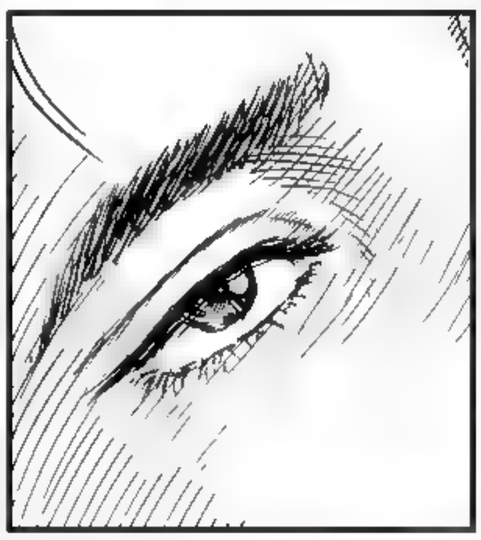
I was simply knocked flat by the unexpected bad turn of events.

...a positive (if feeble) movement of love in my heart.

For the first time in my life I was conscious of...

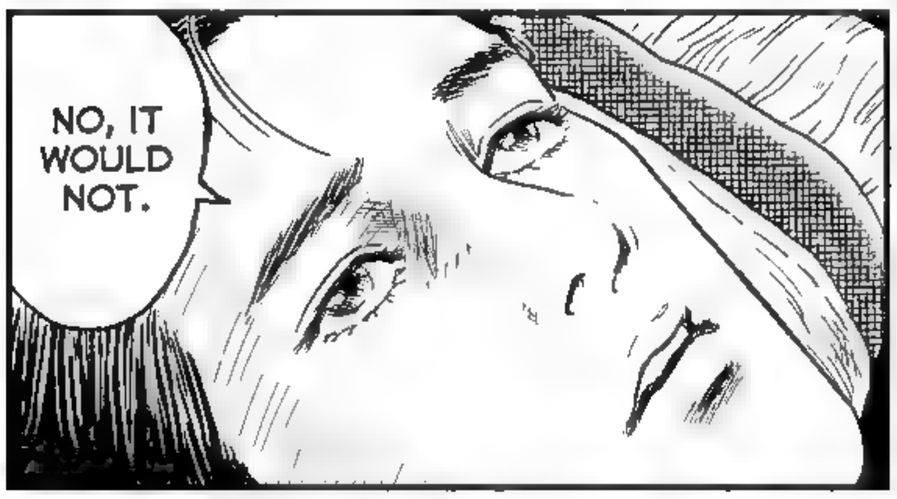
She really was a tired, poverty-stricken woman and nothing more.

But this thought was accompanied by a welling up of feeling for this fellow sufferer of unhappiness.

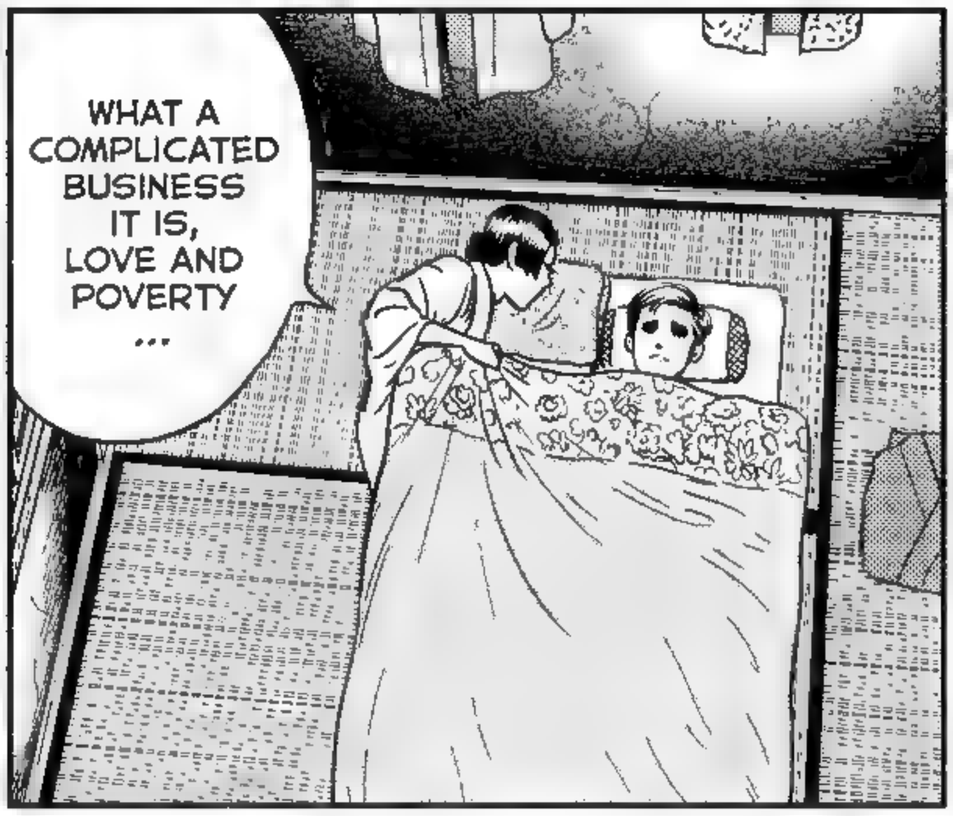


屋畑小店商吉大

SUPPOSE I WORK FOR YOU? WOULDN'T THAT BE ALL RIGHT?


NO, IT WOULD NOT.

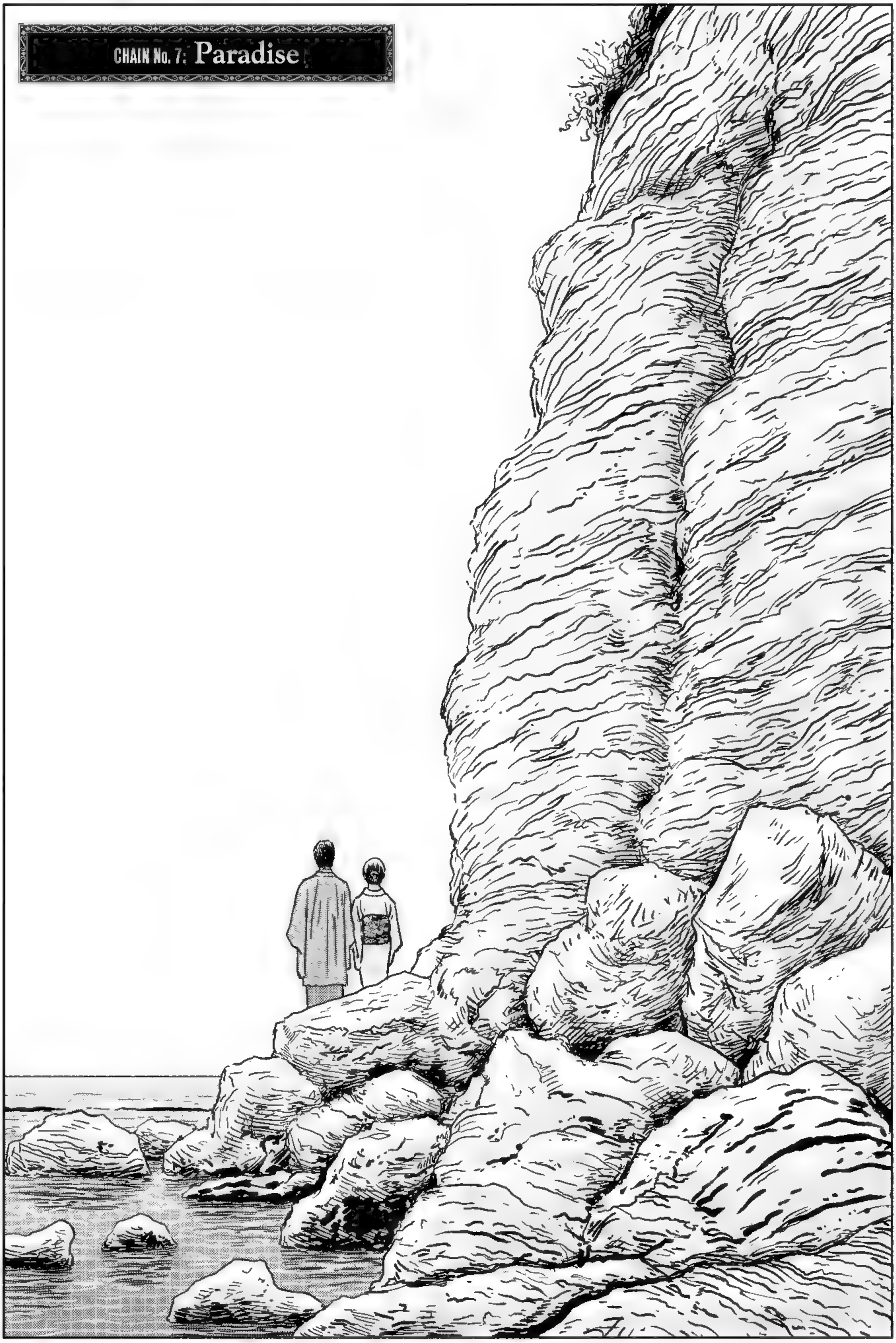
...WHEN POVERTY CAME IN THE DOOR. WERE YOU SERIOUS?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE JOKING WHEN YOU TOLD ME THAT LOVE FLEW OUT THE WINDOW...
YOU DIDN'T COME ANY-MORE.

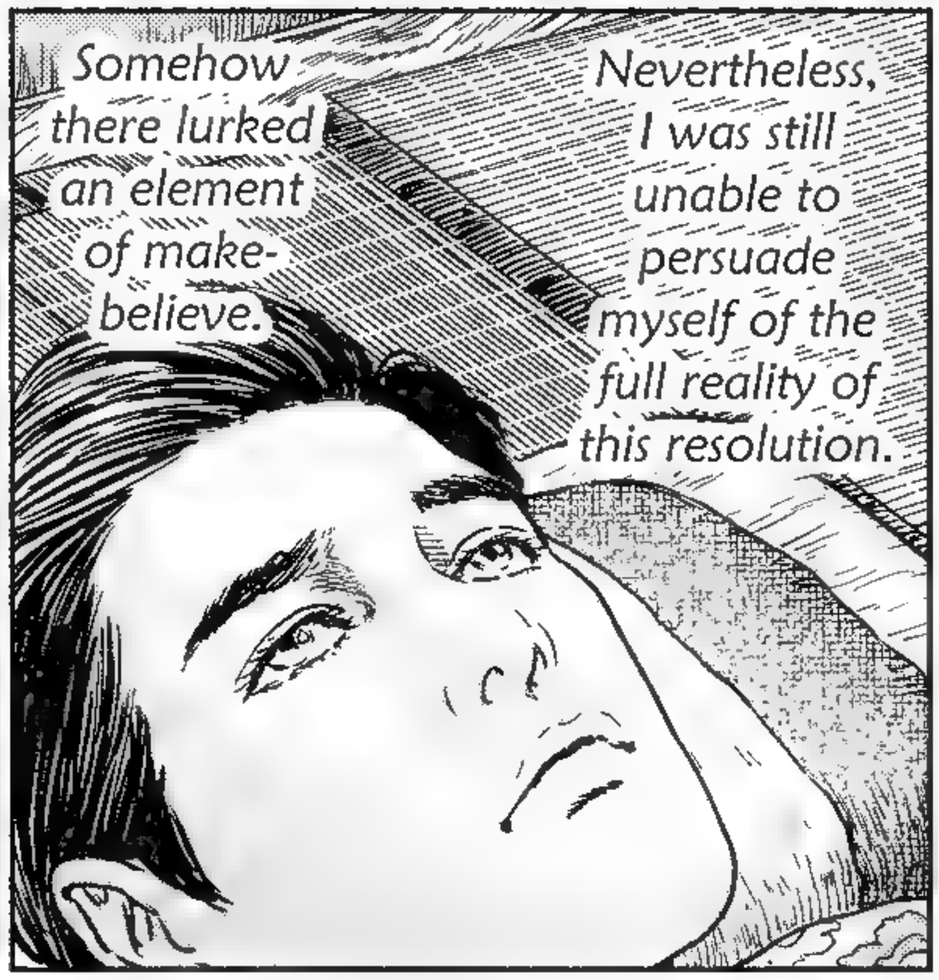

WHAT A COMPLICATED BUSINESS IT IS, LOVE AND POVERTY ...

I...

I WANT TO DIE.

CHAIN No. 7: Paradise





*Banners: *Gimmick Gentleman, Sweetie* etc. (movie and show titles)

喫茶室

THAT'S HOW THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THESE DAYS, I SUPPOSE.

HOW SHAMELESS! LEANING ON EACH OTHER LIKE THAT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!

I felt a love for her from the bottom of my heart, a fondness.

When I considered that this peace would soon be eternal, I felt strangely buoyant.

Had I ever before looked someone in the eyes like this?

SHALL WE DROWN OURSELVES THEN?

I SUPPOSE... LET'S DO IT IN KAMAKURA.

I CAN REALLY COUNT ON YOU.

YOU SURE KNOW A LOT.

CALMO-TIN?

IT'S A SEDATIVE. WE'LL BE ABLE TO DIE PLEAS-ANTLY.

WE CAN SIMPLY TAKE SOME CALMOTIN.

I WANT TO DIE WITHOUT SUFFER-ING.

YOU PAY THIS TIME.

NOW, SHALL WE GO? IF WE GET THE TRAIN NOW, WE CAN ARRIVE IN KAMAKURA JUST AFTER NOON.

...

ALL RIGHT.

P O K

I suddenly saw before my eyes my room in the lodging house.

It was less shame than horror that assaulted me at that moment.

I opened my wallet. Three copper coins.

A bleak cell devoid of any objects which might be pawned.

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE?

It was then I myself determined to kill myself.

Her voice was innocent, but it was painful as only the voice of the woman I loved could be.

This was a humiliation more strange than any I had tasted before, a humiliation I could not live with.

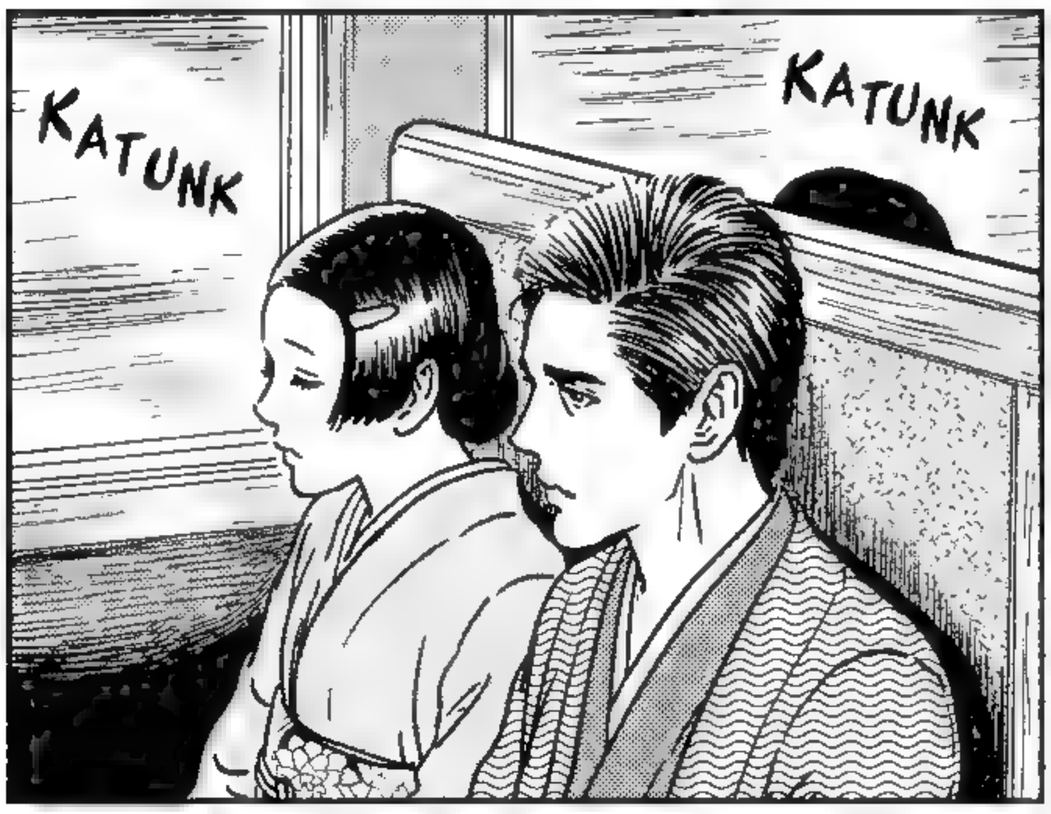
Hayano Drugs

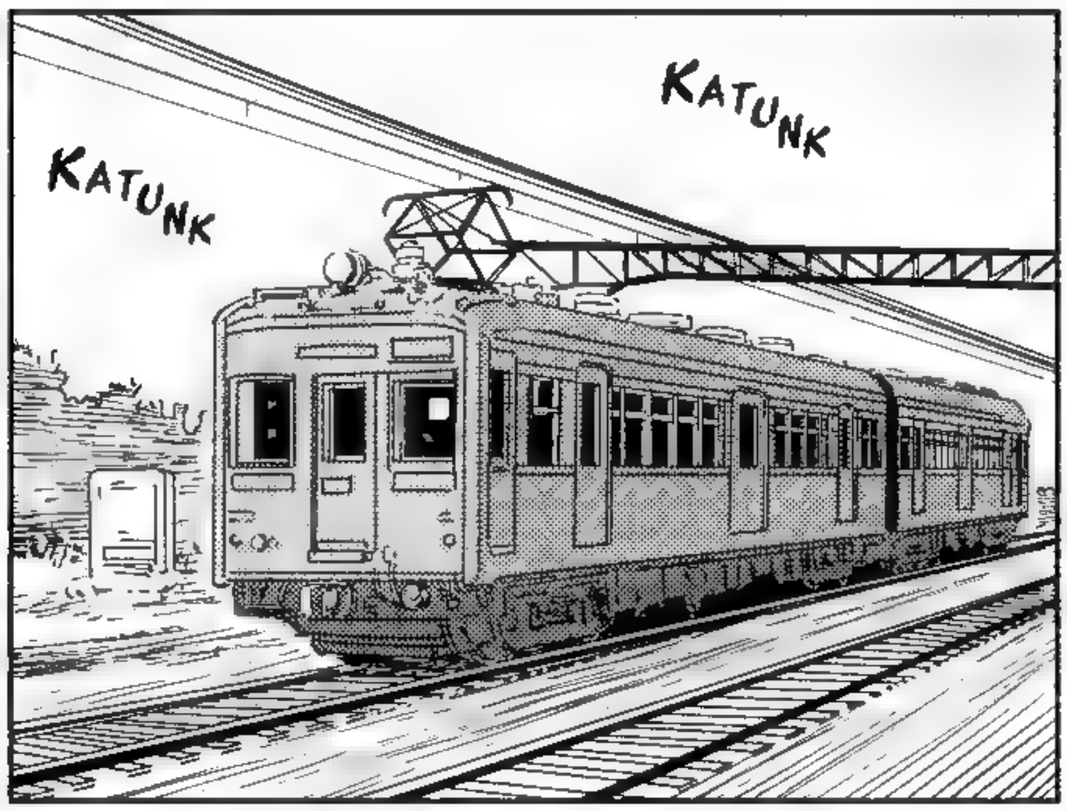
THAT'LL BE FOUR YEN AND 80 SEN.

TWO BOXES OF CALMOTIN.

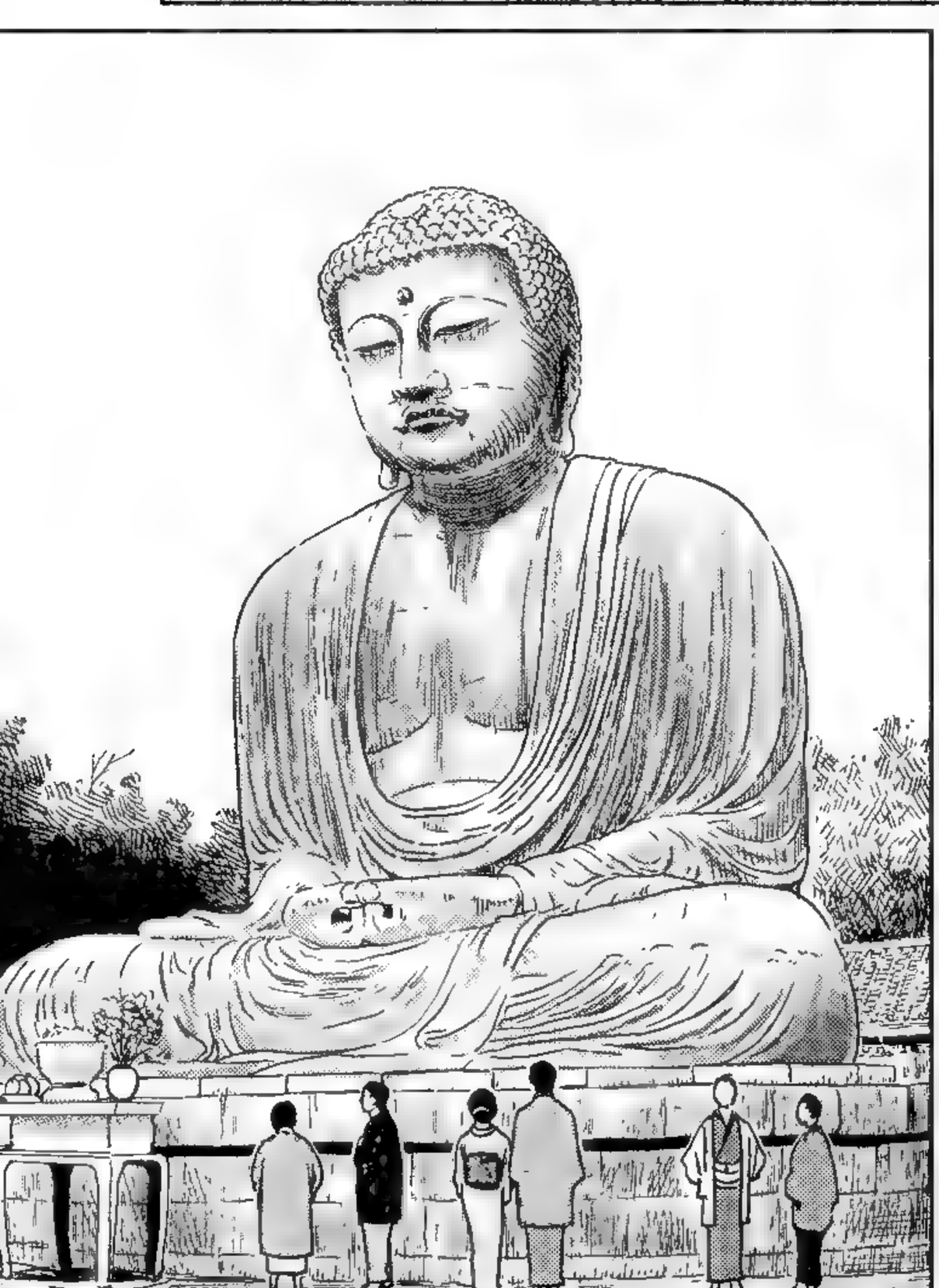
薬

*Hayano Drugstore


KATUNK
KATUNK


KATUNK
KATUNK

らくまか
倉鎌
KAMAKURA
しず
らくよかたき



IT IS. WE'VE GONE AROUND AND DONE ALL SORTS OF THINGS. WE'LL HAVE NO REGRETS.

KAMA-KURA'S A NICE PLACE.

IF WE DAWDLE TOO MUCH, IT'LL BE NIGHT-FALL.

ALL RIGHT, WE'LL REST A LITTLE LONGER AND THEN GO.

YES. BUT I'M EXHAUSTED FROM ALL THE WALKING. CAN WE REST ANOTHER MINUTE?

SHOULD WE BE ON OUR WAY?

NOW...

SHAAAAA

KRICH

DO YOU WANT TO GO HOME?

SAY...

HEH.

...I WOULDN'T MIND JUST BEING YOUR MISTRESS...

IF YOU SAID YOU COULDN'T BE WITH ME...

...

WE'LL BE TOGETHER IN THE NEXT WORLD.

...

KRICH KRICH

SHAAAAA

PSH PSH PSH

PSH PSH

I BORROWED THIS SASH FROM A FRIEND AT THE CAFÉ.

...WAS STRANGELY POPULAR WITH WOMEN. IT'S BEEN A ROUGH LIFE.

THERE'VE BEEN A LOT OF DREADFUL WOMEN.

EVEN A DULL MAN LIKE MYSELF ...

I'M GLAD...

I'M HAPPY NOW.

SO THEN AM I ONE OF THOSE DREADFUL WOMEN?

GOOD-NESS.

YOU SOOTHE ME DOWN TO MY VERY SOUL.

NO. YOU'RE WORLDS APART FROM THEM.

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

IT HURTS ...

WHEEZE

I-IT HURTS ...

WHEEZE

W

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

HRRNGH!

SPLSH

I CAN'T STAND IT!!

IT HURTS !!

WHEEZE

PLRSH

I'LL MAKE EVERYTHING NICE FOR YOU.

POOR THING...

WIPE

WIPE

IT'S ALL RIGHT, TSU-NEKO.

YOU'LL BE AT PEACE SOON.

WIPE

WIPE

THUD

YOZO!!

YOZO!!

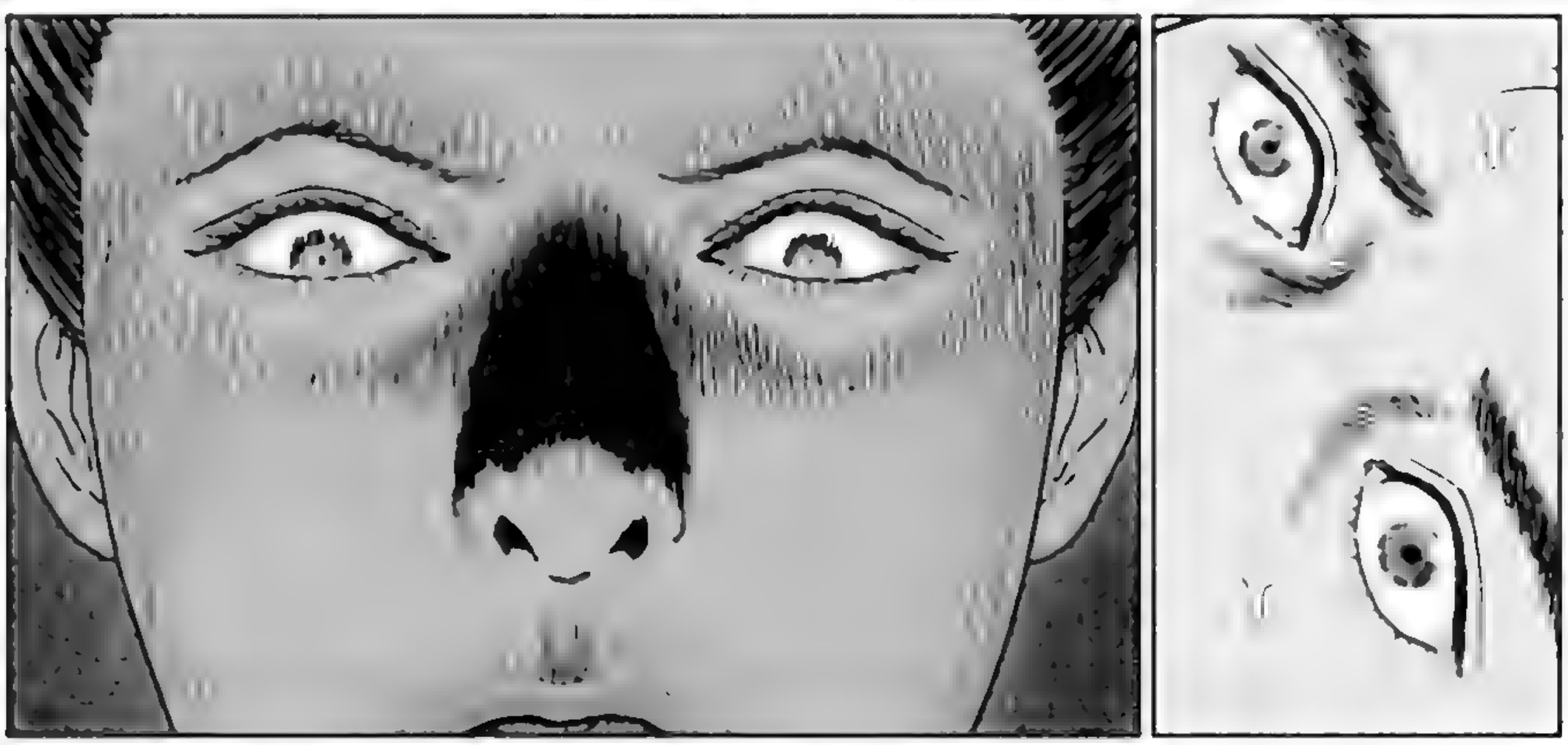
I-I'M SORRY...

F-FATHER...

...IS A DISGRACE TO THE OBA FAMILY.

A MAN LIKE YOU...

I'M COMING TO YOU NOW. WAIT RIGHT THERE.



N-NAEKO...

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD GET AWAY FROM ME?

OBA. YOU TRAITOR.

IT'S A MISUNDER-STANDING ...

NAEKO.

PLEASE FORGIVE ME...

IT HURTS.

IT HURTS.

TSU-NEKO...

TSU-NEKO ...

YOU SCRAP YOUR DEBT TO ME AND COMMIT SUICIDE WITH A WOMAN LIKE THAT? I WON'T ALLOW IT.

IT HURTS.

IT HURTS.

GRAB

YOZZZ-
ZOOOO
!!

Y-

EEEEEAAH!!

WHEEZE

WHEEZE

EEEEAAH!!

EEEEE-
AAAH!!

GO AHEAD AND KICK HER, TOO!!

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA HA HA

TSUNEKO ...

SPLOOSH

HO

HO

HO

HO

HO HO HO HO HO

WAAH!!

WAAH!

YO-
CHAAAN.

YO-
CHAAAN.

SISTER.
SETCHAN
...

WAAAAAH

WAAAAAH

HOLD
HIM.

YOTCHAN.
LOOK. IT'S
YOUR BABY.

WAAAAAAAAAAH

WAAH

WAAH

YO-
CHAAN.

WAAA-AAH!!

WAAAAAAH!!

The sensation of kicking Tsuneko lingered, fresh in my foot.

Were the things I saw that night a vision?

They still hadn't found Tsuneko.

I woke up in the hospital.

...longing for her, I wept.

Such matters did not concern me. I thought instead of Tsuneko, and...

Before he left he informed me that my father and the rest of my family were so enraged that I might easily be disowned once and for all.

A relative from home came to see me.

...and some would squeeze my hand when they left.

The nurses used to visit my sickroom, gaily...

Tsuneko's body washed up on the shore.

SHAA

A week later...

...and they said there was no trace of her in life.

Her face was cruelly swollen and pale...

CHAIN No. 8: Cold Sweat

（　）聞　新朝日　東　（日曜日）

大庭縣議の令弟　葉藏氏
鎌倉で心中を圖る

（鎌倉電話）昨夜鎌北瑞泉ヶ町某別荘で神奈川縣會議員大庭氏令弟で東京ヶ下本郷某川町仙遊館止宿學生葉藏（二）は二十日午後六時頃相州腰越海岸に神社裏手海岸にて女と共に情死を圖つた（寫眞は大庭葉藏氏）

女は銀座の女給
阿部ツネ子
廣島より駈落ち上京
内緣の夫は現在服役中
夫の不在に託け
不貞の果ての情死

女は當初行方不明だつたが、事件發生から一週間後海岸の砂丘で發見された（寫眞は阿部ツネ子）

廣島の親族
呆然として死體と對面

女の内緣の夫は當歳で現在服役中　廣島の親族同道來鎌して死體と對面、衝撃の餘り口も利けず

この男女兩名は催眠劑カルモチンを飲み情死を圖つたものであるが原因其の他は未だ不明である

口中殺菌消臭劑
ニオイクイーン

Headline: Assemblyman Oba's brother attempts a lovers' suicide
*see page 614 for full translation.

TSU-
NEKO
...

LET'S ALL BURY HER.

BUT THE POOR THING.

BROKEN MAN.

PITIFUL WOMAN, *HM*? IN THE END, SHE DIED ALONE.

WHAT?

TO HAVE WOMEN FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU...

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

KSH

KSH

JUST MY IMAG-INATION ?

UNH!
UNNH!

...AAH
!!

FORGIVE ME FOR
NOT BEING ABLE
TO DIE WITH YOU!!

FORGIVE ME!
FORGIVE ME,
TSUNEKO!!

YOU
DID
IT...

WHAT ?!

YOU DID IT...

ON PURPOSE ...

ON PURPOSE ...

ON PURPOSE ...

ON PURPOSE ...

ON PURPOSE ...

AND THEN I'LL COME TO YOU, TSUNEKO.

I-I WILL DIE, AFTER ALL.

...MY SLAVE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY.

I WON'T ALLOW IT. YOU WILL BE...

PLEASE LET ME DIE.

PLEASE. HAVE MERCY.

...HOW ABOUT YOU DO IT WITH THESE?

IF YOU WANT TO DIE SO BADLY...

GO AHEAD, KILL YOURSELF. THRUST THAT INTO YOUR EAR.

WHAM

...

LEAP

AAAAH!!

I WAS MOVED TO A POLICE HOLDING CELL AFTER THE HOSPITAL.

...OH YES. I...

A-A DREAM ?

WHERE AM I?

?!

OW...

Perhaps I picked at it in my sleep. There was no doubt that this pain made me have a strange dream.

This was blood from the pimple that had appeared under my ear a few days earlier.

QUES-TIONING.

YOZO OBA.

YOUR MOTHER'S TO BLAME FOR HAVING BROUGHT SUCH A HANDSOME BOY INTO THE WORLD.

THERE'S A HANDSOME LAD FOR YOU! IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, I CAN SEE.

...

MM. THAT'S HUMAN NATURE, I GUESS.

...YES.

YOU MISS HER, DON'T YOU?

OH...

...

WHEN WAS IT YOU FIRST TOOK UP WITH THIS WOMAN?

HOW DID THAT WORK THEN?

OH HO... BUT SHE WAS A MARRIED WOMAN.

I TOOK UP WITH HER THE FIRST NIGHT WE MET.

...I SEE.

...IT WAS A DEEP AND RICH EXPERIENCE.

YES. SHE WAS A MARRIED WOMAN, SO...

AND THEN ?

MM-HMM. MM-HMM.

HER BODY ALSO SHOWED AN EXTRAORDINARY INTIMACY, AND THE PALMS OF MY HANDS BROUGHT HER BREASTS TO ME.

SHE WAS TIRED OF LIFE, AND I TOO WAS TIRED. WE WERE THE SAME.

KOFF!

NO NEED TO RUSH. TAKE YOUR TIME AND TELL YOUR STORY.

KOFF!

KOFF!

AND THEN ...

WHEN WE EMBRACED SO FIERCELY, WE FINALLY MELTED AND BECAME ONE.

KOFF!

YOU'VE BEEN COUGHING BLOOD, HAVEN'T YOU?

YOU MUSTN'T NEGLECT YOUR HEALTH THAT WAY.

SAY...

WHAT ?

KOFF!

KOFF!

OH... YES.

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

I HOPE YOU WILL DO WHAT YOU CAN TO HELP ME.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

KOFF!

WE ALWAYS TAKE IT INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN A PRISONER ANSWERS EVERYTHING HONESTLY.

I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA NOW.

YOU CAN GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM.

THAT COUGH.

WAS THAT REAL?

KOFF!

KOFF!

SAY.

...!!

It was worse, I am sure, even than when in school I was plummeted into hell by that stupid Takeichi...

...tapping me on the back and saying, "You did it on purpose."

The young officer smiled quietly.

Even now the recollection makes me feel so embarrassed I can't stand it.

An antique dealer named Shibuta...

...reluctantly agreed to be my guarantor.

But I was expelled from college.

The charge against me was suspended.

*Antiques Seiryuen

His face, particularly around the eyes, looked so much like a flatfish that my father always called him by that name. I had also always thought of him as "Flatfish."

He was a man of 40, a bachelor and henchman of my father's who was a frequent visitor at his house in Tokyo.

PLEASE DO NOT GO OUT.

UNDERSTAND? YOU'RE NOT TO GO OUT.

PAP

...

HEH HEH HEH ...

YES, OF COURSE.

But I spent my days from the moment I got up until I went to bed trapped in my cubicle of a room.

I had quite lost even the energy to think of suicide.

Flatfish feared me committing suicide and he sternly forbade me to leave the house.

MUST BE NICE NOT TO HAVE TO DO ANYTHING.

FOOD.

KLATTER

PAPAW

THOSE WHO DON'T WORK SHOULDN'T GET TO EAT.

OH.

I'M SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE.

But if this were the case, this father and son led a remarkably cheerless existence.

Sometimes, late at night, they would order noodles from a neighborhood shop—just for the two of them, without inviting me—and they ate in silence, not exchanging so much as a word.

Gossip had it that the boy on duty who brought me my meals was an illegitimate son of Flatfish.

HEY! DON'T GO GROWING UP INTO SOMEONE LIKE THAT.

AAH, THIS IS WONDERFUL TUNA.

...Flatfish invited me downstairs for a rare dinner there.

One evening...

IN THE FUTURE ...

...I MEAN.

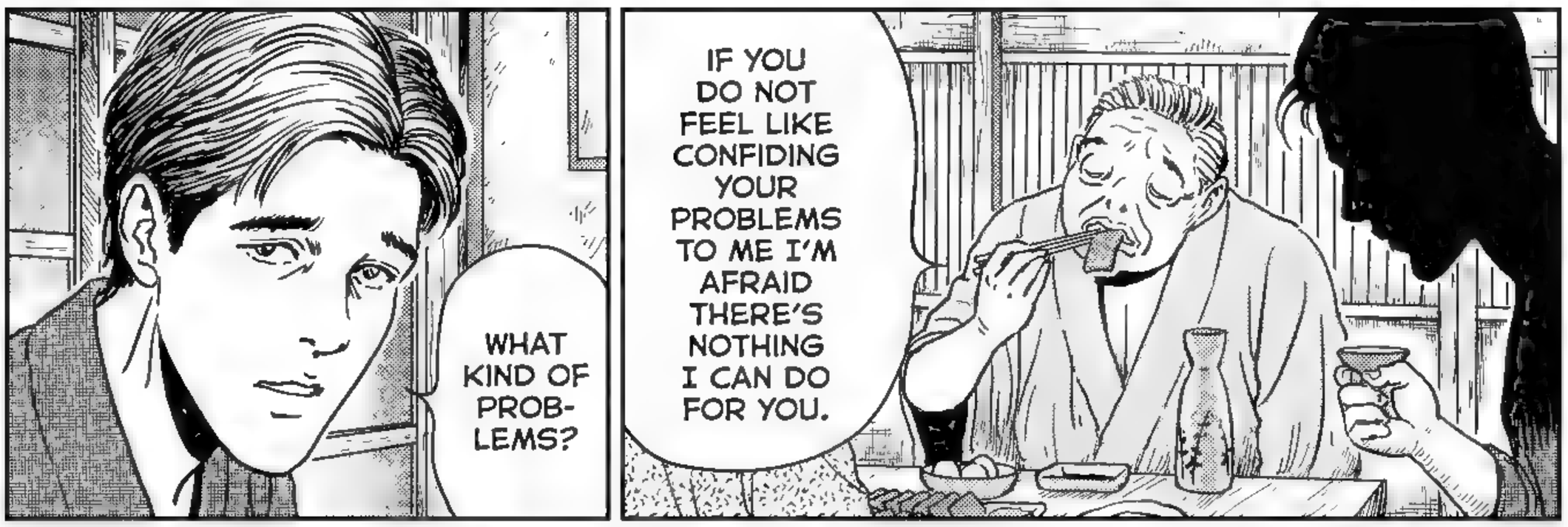
WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO?

OH...

IF YOU MEND YOUR WAYS AND BRING ME YOUR PROBLEMS— SERIOUSLY, I MEAN—I WILL CERTAINLY SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP YOU.

WITH THE SUSPENDED SENTENCE, YOUR REHABILITATION DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON YOURSELF.

...


WHAT KIND OF PROB-LEMS?
IF YOU DO NOT FEEL LIKE CONFIDING YOUR PROBLEMS TO ME I'M AFRAID THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU.
DO YOU THINK I OUGHT TO GET A JOB?
"FOR EXAMPLE"! WHAT DO YOU YOURSELF WANT TO DO NOW?
FOR EXAM-PLE?
ISN'T THERE SOMETHING WEIGHING ON YOUR HEART?
YES, I KNOW, IT COSTS MONEY. BUT THE QUESTION IS WHAT YOU FEEL.
BUT EVEN SUPPOSING I SAID I WANTED TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL...
NO, DON'T ASK ME. TELL ME WHAT YOU'D LIKE.
But thanks to his intolerably prudent, circumlocutious manner of speech, I felt only irritable, and this caused the whole course of my life to be altered.
In later years, I came to realize that if I had started school, my family would have sent me a more adequate allowance.

IF YOU WERE TO COME TO ME TO DISCUSS SERIOUSLY YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, I WOULD CERTAINLY DO WHAT I COULD.

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR YOU NOW, AND I DON'T LIKE YOU TO HAVE SUCH HALF-HEARTED FEELINGS.

HOW ABOUT IT? HAVE YOU ANY ASPIRA-TIONS FOR THE FUTURE?

NO, I WASN'T THINKING OF GETTING A JOB WITH A COMPANY.

DO YOU REALIZE THAT NOWADAYS EVEN GRADUATES OF TOKYO IMPERIAL UNIVERSITY—

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

IF YOU WON'T LET ME STAY HERE IN YOUR HOUSE, I'LL WORK...

WHAAAT ?

WHAT THEN?

I WANT TO BE A PAINTER.

HA HA HA!

A PAINTER, THEN...

A PAINTER ?!

HA HA HA!

It had been his prediction.

And he had been right in his prediction that women would fall for me, hadn't he?

HA HA HA!

"You'll be a great painter."

Takeichi had said that to me.

The next morning at dawn...

...I ran away from Flatfish's house.

THINK IT OVER. PLEASE DEVOTE THIS EVENING TO THINKING IT OVER SERIOUSLY.

THERE'S NO POINT IN DISCUSSING SUCH A THING. YOUR FEELINGS ARE STILL ALL UP IN THE AIR.

I shall return tonight without fail. I am going to discuss my plans for the future with a friend who lives at the address below. Please don't worry about me. I'm telling the truth.

Masao Horiki, 3-chome
Asakusa, Koto-ku

I left behind a note.

I did not run away because I was mortified.

I felt rather sorry for Flatfish that I should be a burden on him and found the situation intolerable.

Then I stood there uncertainly, utterly at a loss what to do.

I walked as far as Shinjuku.

I simply hoped to pacify Flatfish, if only for a split second.

However, I had no intention of consulting the likes of Horiki about my future plans.

I had no close friends, and besides, I lacked even the ability to pay visits.

The front door of another person's house was more fearful to me than the gates of hell.

Horiki... Here was a real case of a true word having been said in jest.

堀木

火の用心

*Horiki / Take care with fire

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

HEY.

WANT, WELL...

OH...

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

NEVER DREAMED YOU'D SHOW UP AT MY DOOR...

COME IN.

WELL, FINE. I CAN GIVE YOU A MINUTE, I SUPPOSE.

BUSI-NESS? WHAT KIND OF BUSI-NESS?

I'M AWFULLY BUSY THESE DAYS.

I'VE GOT BUSINESS TODAY.

IN HERE.

?!

Naeko...

CHAIN No. 9: Toad

NAEKO.

O-OH...

FWP

HEH!

RIGHT. I WILL.

SO, HORIKI, PLEASE CONTACT EACH BRANCH.

HARSH AS ALWAYS, I SEE.

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE A COMPLIMENT, MATAGI?

FOR INSTANCE, IN THE NEWS-PAPER RECENTLY ...

BUT IT'S TRUE SOME *COULD* BE CALLED HUMAN GARBAGE.

THE LOWEST OF THE LOW IS OUT THERE. SOME PEOPLE REALLY ARE HUMAN GARBAGE.

HORIKI, YOU'VE BEEN A RATHER TERRIBLE COMRADE...BUT YOU'RE STILL BETTER THAN SOME.

I'M ASSUMING THE MAN KICKED HER OFF THEIR PERCH.

SHE WAS ALONE IN THE WATER. ODD, DON'T YOU THINK?

HOW DREADFUL THAT ONLY THE WOMAN DIED. BUT IT'S STRANGE...

THE KAMA-KURA LOVERS' SUICIDE.

HA HA HA!

IMPOSSIBLE. BRUTES LIKE THAT COULDN'T POSSIBLY EXIST...

I KNOW SOME MEN ARE INDEED LIKE THAT.

HE KICKED HER TO SAVE HIMSELF...

I'LL BE ON MY WAY NOW. MAKE SURE YOU SEND THE MESSAGE, HORIKI.

BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

SURE.

SUCH MEN DO ACTUALLY EXIST.

NO.

WHAT ARE YOU GRINNING ABOUT?!

WHAT?

"Human garbage"... for some reason, Naeko Matagi's words echoed pleasingly in my mind.

The pain was strangely sweet, almost numbing.

...TAKE CARE OF THEM-SELVES.

THINGS WILL...

WHAT'S THE GRIN ABOUT? LET ME GIVE YOU A WORD OF ADVICE— STOP YOUR FOOLISHNESS HERE AND NOW.

NOT YET?

BEEN FORGIVEN BY YOUR FATHER, HAVE YOU?

YOU. WHAT A SHOCK.

DON'T BE STUPID. I'M MEETING WITH SOMEONE.

BUSI-NESS? FOR THE MOVE-MENT?

I'M AWFULLY BUSY THESE DAYS.

I'VE GOT BUSINESS TODAY ANYWAY.

...

DON'T TEAR THE THREAD OFF THE CUSHION!

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?

OH! MISS NAKA-NO!

I'VE BEEN EXPECT-ING YOU.

PLEASE. HAVE A SEAT.

NAKANO IS HERE. FROM SHINONOME PUBLISHING.

EXCUSE ME, MR. HORIKI.

IT'S FINE. PLEASE IGNORE HIM.

I'VE GOT THE MAGAZINE ILLUSTRATION RIGHT HERE.

I'M SORRY. YOU HAVE A GUEST.

HAVE YOU MADE SWEET RED-BEAN SOUP? TERRIFIC.

TWO WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH.

WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

MASAO, HERE YOU ARE.

DAMN IT!

HM? WHAT IS IT THEN?

AND THIS TELEGRAM'S COME.

...IN OKUBO.

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

GO BACK AT ONCE!! IMAGINE– A RUNAWAY, AND LOOKING SO SMUG!

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?! IT'S A MESSAGE FROM YOUR GUARDIAN.

THAT'S QUITE NEAR MY OFFICE...

I'M BUSY. I HAVEN'T THE TIME TO TAKE YOU BACK MYSELF!!

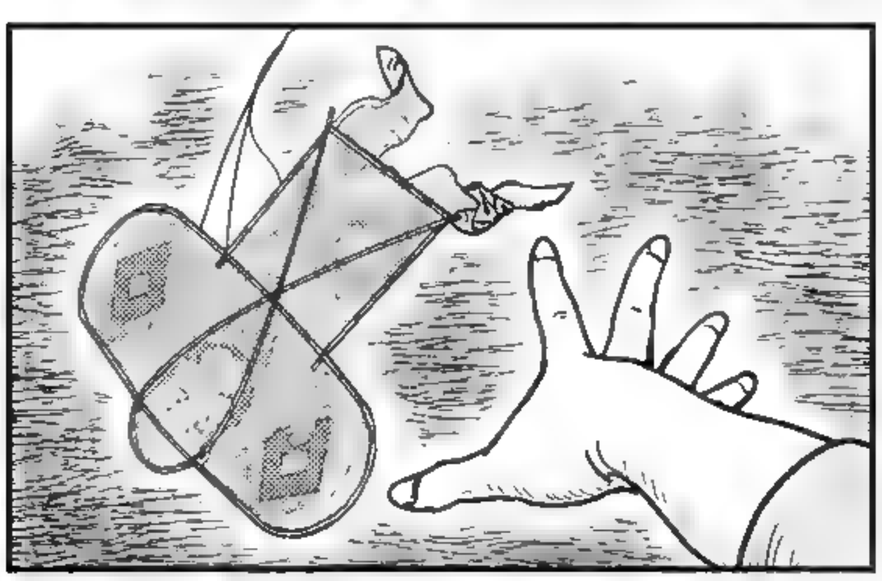
IF YOU'VE NOWHERE TO GO... IF YOU'D LIKE...

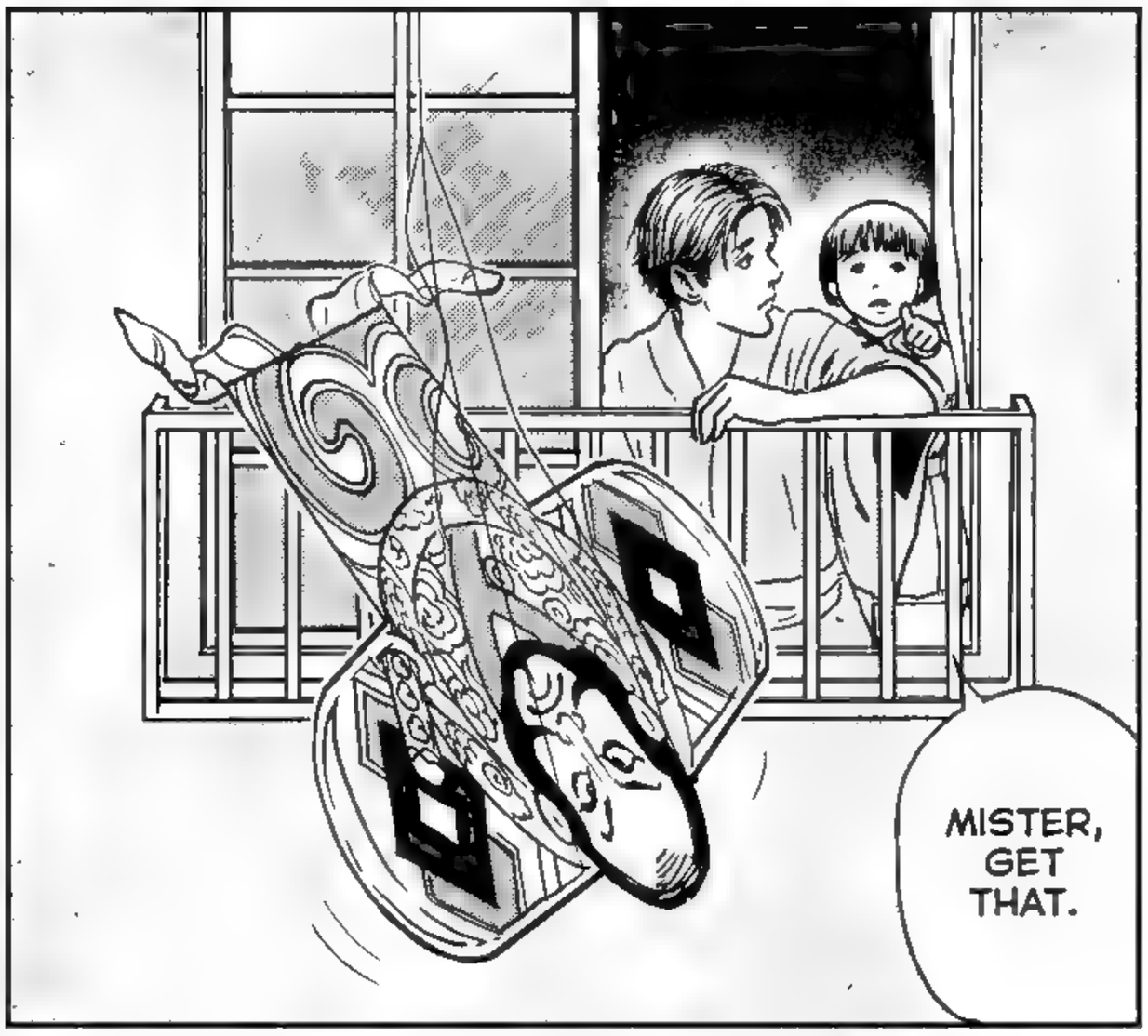
YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S HAD AN UNHAPPY CHILDHOOD.

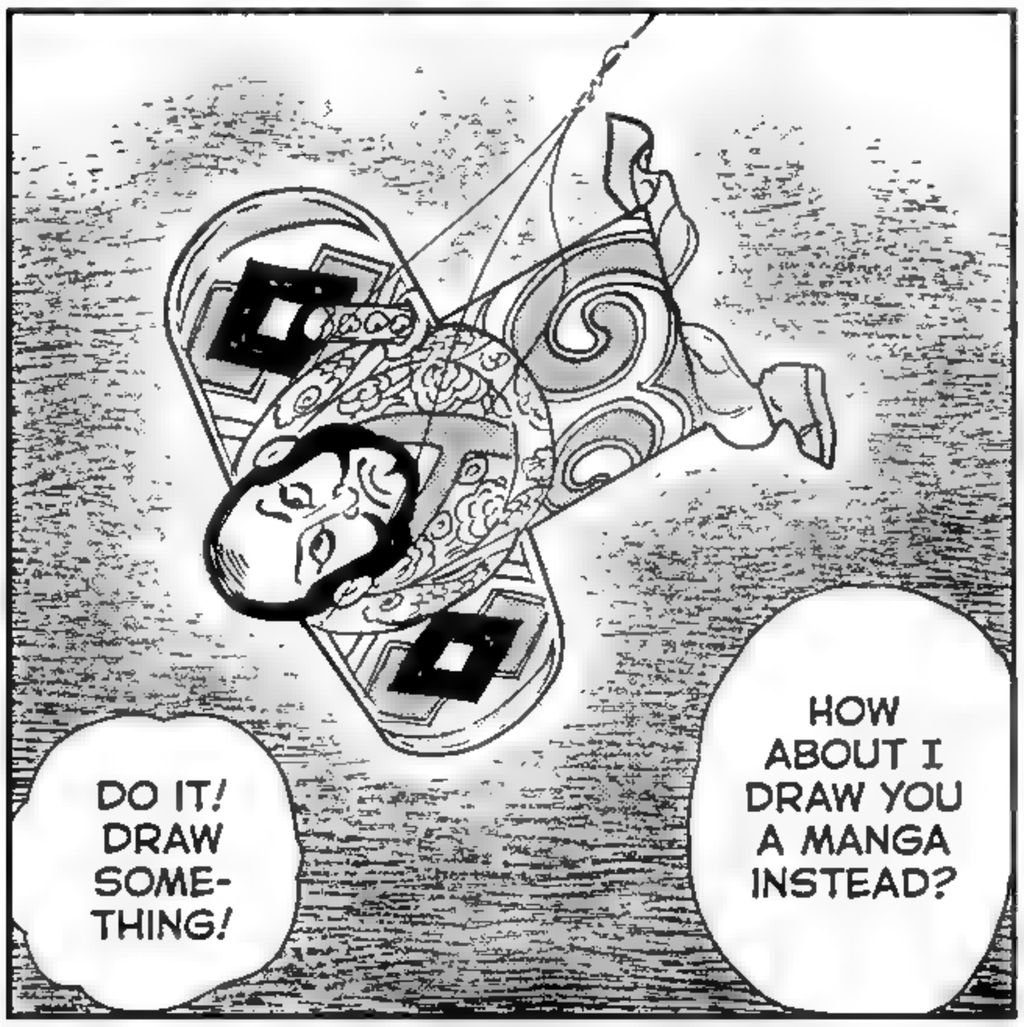
I WORK AT THIS MAGAZINE, BUT I LIVE IN AN APARTMENT IN KOENJI WITH MY FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER.

I'M SHIZUKO NAKANO. MY HUSBAND'S PASSED AWAY...

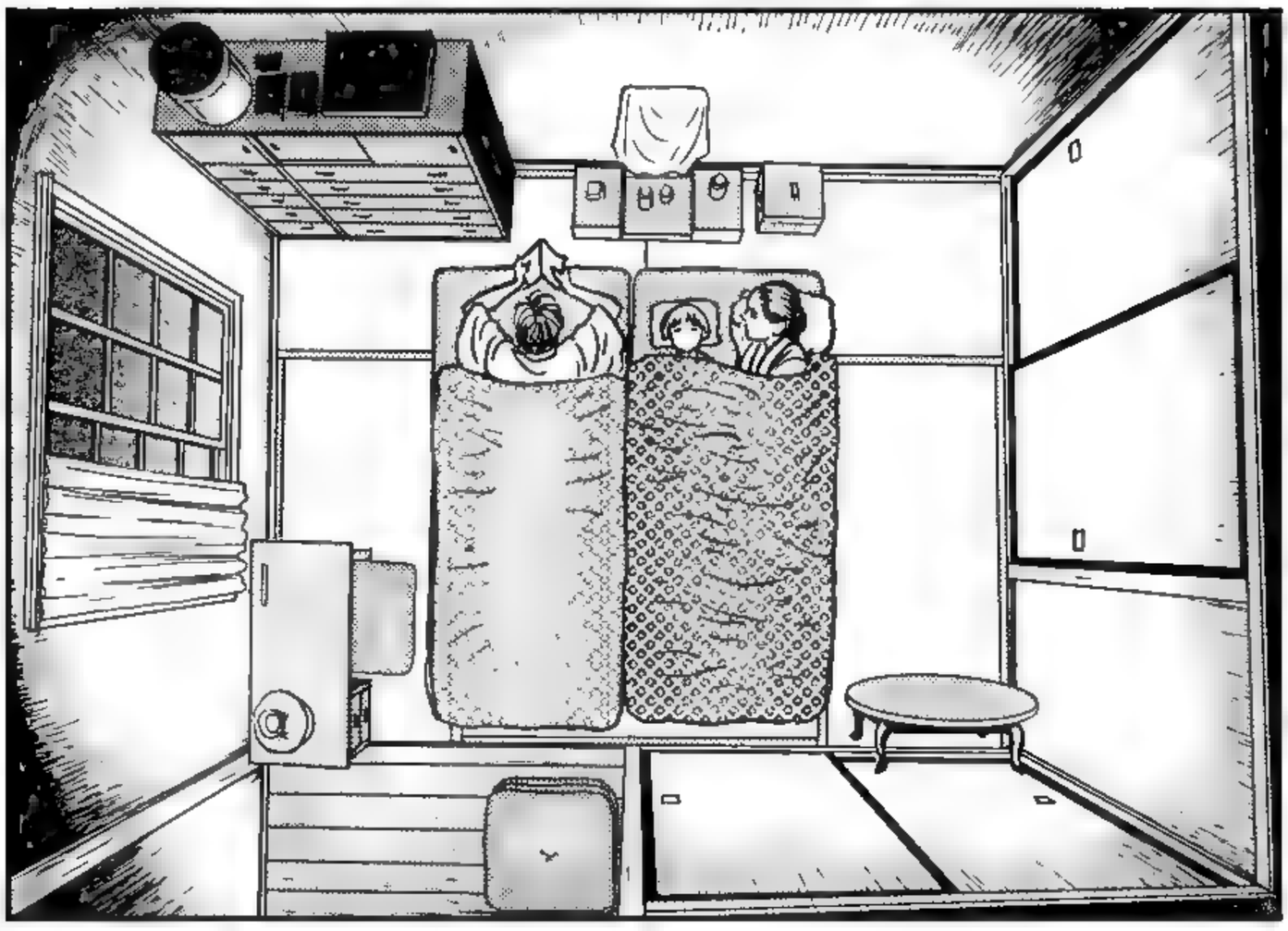
I led for the first time the life of a kept man.




MISTER, GET THAT.


DO IT! DRAW SOME-THING!
HOW ABOUT I DRAW YOU A MANGA INSTEAD?

...SORRY, SHIGEKO.
I CAN'T REACH IT.



LOVE FLIES OUT THE WINDOW WHEN POVERTY COMES IN THE DOOR, THEY SAY, AND IT'S TRUE.

HOW MUCH?

A LOT.

I WANT SOME MONEY.

I'M A MUCH BETTER ARTIST THAN HORIKI.

I WANT TO BUY MY DRINKS AND CIGARETTES WITH MY OWN MONEY.

SUCH A TRITE EXPRES-SION...

I wanted her to see it. I could never paint such a gem again...

The masterpiece I had lost in one of my frequent changes of address.

I wanted to show Shizuko the self-portrait from my school days.

YOU'RE ADORABLE WHEN YOU JOKE THAT WAY WITH A SERIOUS FACE.

ARE YOU REALLY?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO DRAW FOR OUR MAGAZINE? I CAN EASILY ASK THE EDITOR.

YES, THAT'S SO. I'VE BURST OUT LAUGHING OVER THOSE MANGA YOU'RE ALWAYS DRAWING FOR SHIGEKO.

I'M SURE I'M BETTER THAN HORIKI AT MANGA IF NOTHING ELSE.

MANGA, I MEAN.

SNRR

SNRR

YOU'RE ALWAYS SO TIMID AND SOMETIMES YOU GET TERRIBLY DEPRESSED.

BUT THAT ONLY MAKES A WOMAN'S HEART ITCH ALL THE MORE FOR YOU.

WOMEN LAY EYES ON YOU AND THEY CAN'T LET YOU ALONE.

KLAKKA

SET ME FREE...

HELP ME...

I WANT TO FLEE...

RUN AWAY...

SET ME FREE...

SET ME FREE...

*Manga series *Sekkachi Pin-chan* (Busy Miss Pin) by Sansuke Hiyaase

チカッセ ピンチャン 軟漫画

作・助三 汗冷

SKRTCH SKRTCH

I made plans to leave, but I was essentially dependent on Shizuko for everything.

My anxiety and gloom grew ever greater.

PLIP PLIP

I bought liquor and cigarettes with the proceeds...

Thanks to Shizuko's efforts, my manga began to produce a surprising amount of money.

DADDY, WHAT ARE YOU CRYING FOR?

HM? ...ALL RIGHT.

DADDY, LET'S PLAY.

The one slight relief came from Shigeko.

By now she was calling me "Daddy" with no show of hesitation.

OH... I JUST REMEMBERED MY FAMILY WHEN I WAS DRAWING *SEKKACHI PIN-CHAN.*

BECAUSE I DISOBEYED MY FATHER.

WHY HAVEN'T YOU A CHANCE?

BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE DADDY HAS A CHANCE.

YES, I'M SURE HE'LL GRANT YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT.

DADDY, IS IT TRUE THAT GOD WILL GRANT YOU ANYTHING IF YOU PRAY FOR IT?

UM, OKAY...

SHIGEKO, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE FROM GOD?

I...
WOULD LIKE
MY REAL
DADDY
BACK.

HELP
ME...

SET
ME
FREE
...

I felt dizzy.
An enemy.
Here was another frightening grown-up who would intimidate me.

I had been deluding myself with the belief that Shigeko at least was safe. I knew that from then on I would have to be timid even before that little girl.

WELL, IF IT ISN'T SHIZUKO AND SHIGEKO, TOO!

KACHAK

IS THE LADY-KILLER AT HOME?

DON'T SAY SUCH THINGS.

YOU'LL MAKE ME CRY.

THERE'S NO COMPETING WITH AMATEURS— THEY'RE SO FOOLHARDY THEY DON'T KNOW WHEN TO BE AFRAID.

BUT DON'T GET OVER-CONFIDENT. YOUR COMPO-SITION'S STILL NOT WORTH A DAMN.

YOUR MANGA ARE GETTING QUITE POPULAR, *HM?*

Just enough talent to get along... Imagine saying I had enough talent to get along!!

I really had to smile at that.

IF ALL YOU'VE GOT IS JUST ENOUGH TALENT TO GET ALONG, SOONER OR LATER YOU'LL BETRAY YOURSELF.

*Oden

What was the substance of this thing called "society"?

What did he mean by "society"?

おでん

YOU'VE GONE FAR ENOUGH. SOCIETY WON'T STAND FOR MORE.

YOU MUST STOP YOUR FOOLING AROUND WITH WOMEN.

"Before you know it, you'll be ostracized by society."

It's not society. You're going to do the ostracizing, aren't you?

"If you do such a thing, society will make you suffer for it."

It's not society. It's you, isn't it?

"Society won't stand for it."

It's not society.

You're the one who won't stand for it—right?

Don't you mean yourself?

YOU'VE PUT ME IN A COLD SWEAT!

...

十銭

*Price: 15 sen

SORRY, BUT SPARE ME FIVE YEN AGAIN.

金十五銭

BY THE WAY, OBA.

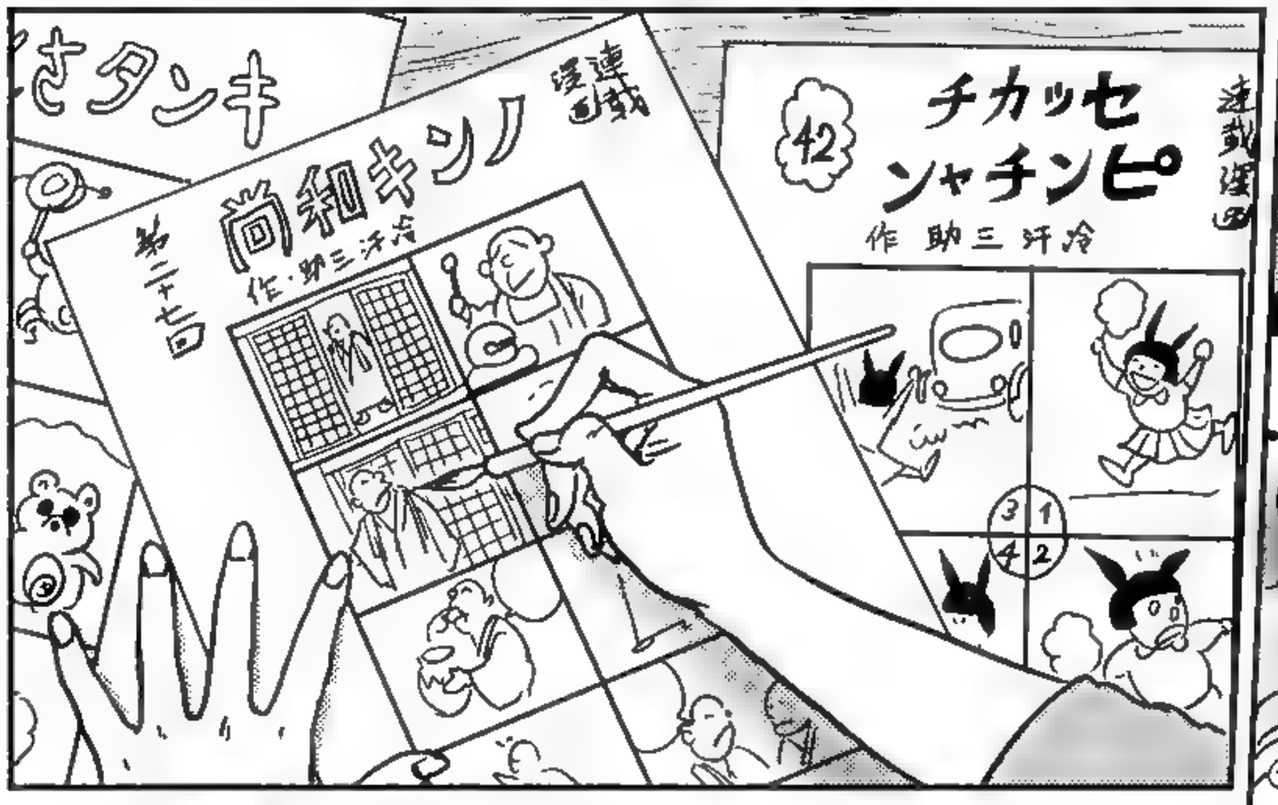
But perhaps society is actually nothing more than an individual.

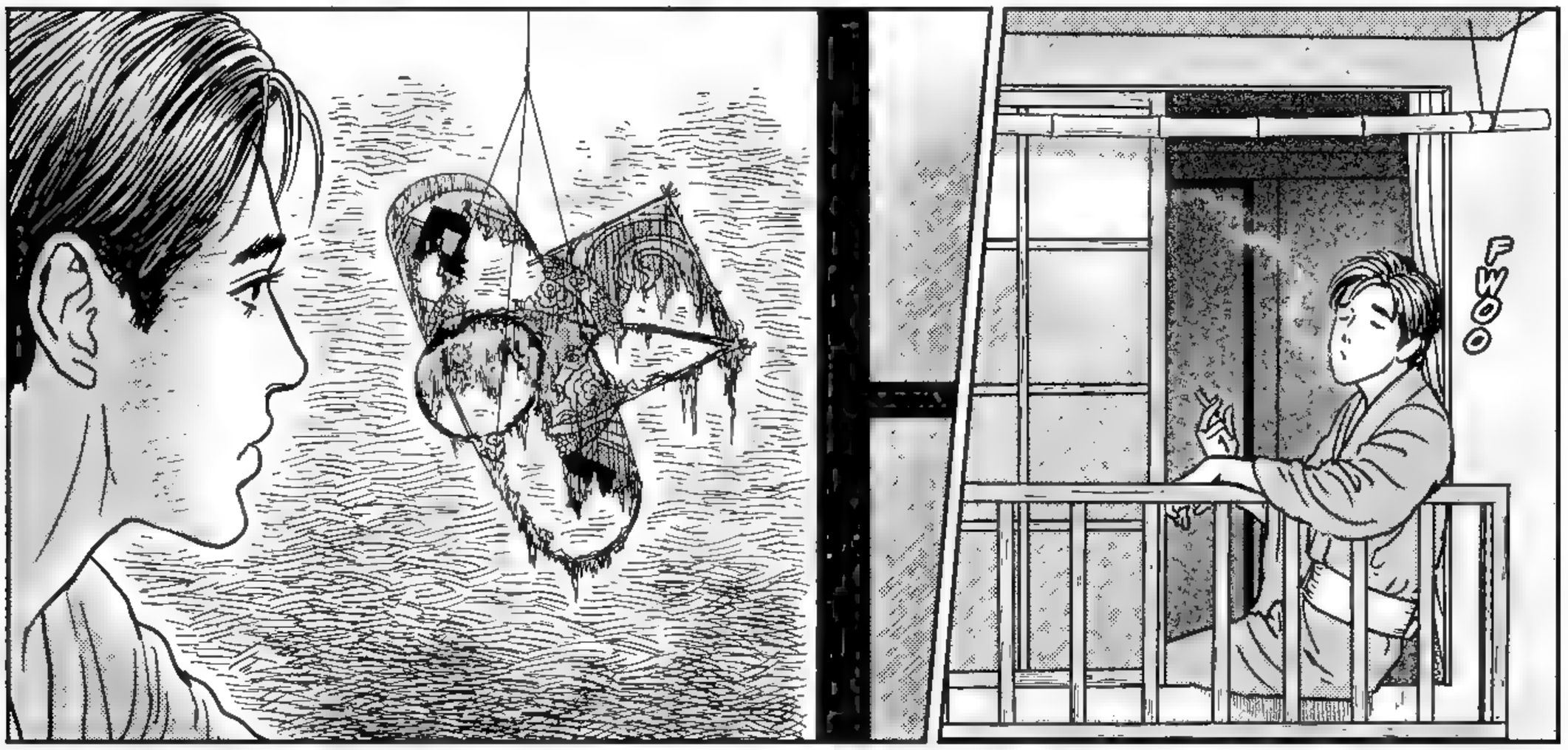
I had thought of society as something powerful, fierce, frightening.

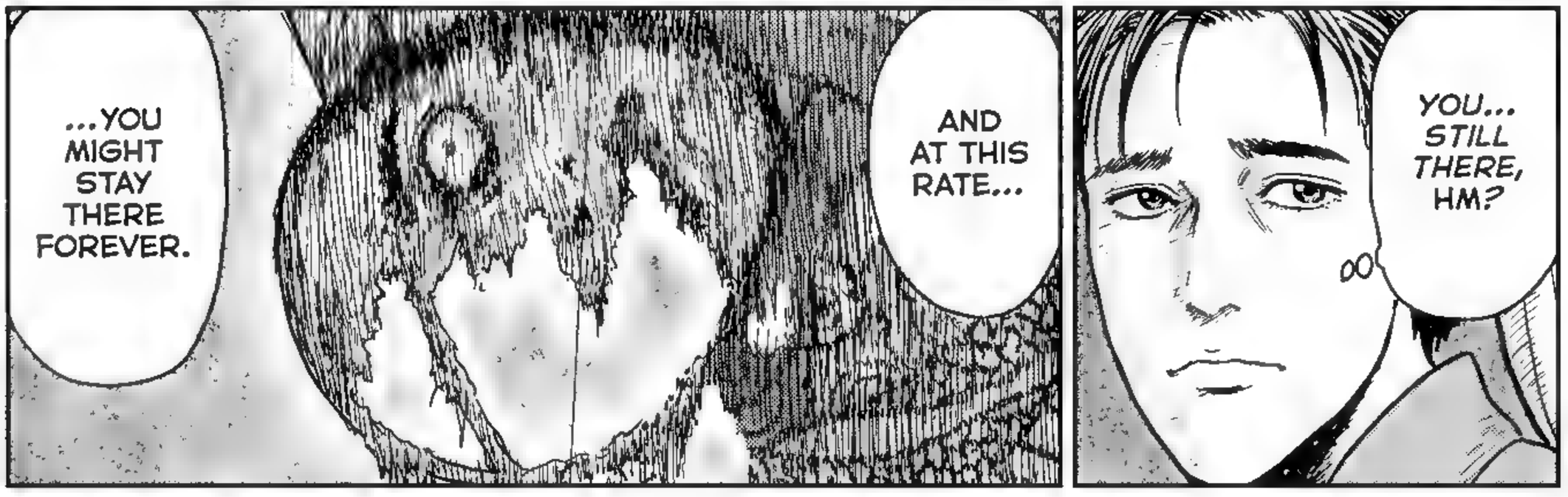
SHOW SOCIETY SOME RESPECT.

SHOW RESPECT.

*Manga series: *Sekkachi Pin-chan* (Busy Miss Pin)
Manga series· *Nonki Osho* (The Happy-Go Lucky Priest) by Sansuke Hiyaase, No. 27







SAY, SHIZUKO ?

GOOD-NESS, THE DRINK'S MADE YOU QUITE CHEERFUL, *HM?*

I'M HOOME!

WHAT ABOUT YOU WHEN YOU SLEEP? YOU LOOK LIKE AN OLD MAN.

DID YOU KNOW I GET INSPIRATION FOR MY MANGA FROM LOOKING AT YOUR FACE WHEN YOU'RE ASLEEP?

THE MORE I LOOK AT YOU THE FUNNIER YOUR FACE SEEMS.

THUD

HURRY TO BED AND STOP MAKING SUCH A RACKET.

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT. YOU DRAINED ME DRY. "MAN'S LIFE IS LIKE A FLOWING RIVER..."

ZZZ ZZZ.

ZZZ ZZZ.

ZZZ ZZZ.

ZZZ ZZZ.

zzz
zzz.

zzz
zzz.

with only the same rule as the one before

And it started again the next day

Which was to avoid the great barbarian joys likewise the great sorrows

I was an animal lower than a dog. lower than a cat.

That is what I was. It was not a question of whether or not society tolerated me.

A toad. I moved sluggishly that's all.

as would a toad bypass a stone which blocks its path...

(verses by Guy Charles Cros)

...and did anything as long as it was not in accord with "accepted usage."

At bars I acted the part of a ruffian, kissed women indiscriminately...

I went drinking not only in Koenji but as far as Ginza.

The quantities of liquor I consumed gradually increased.

オービドカイカン

ルービドエース

高円寺南口会

YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND IN KOENJI.

YOCHAN, YOU'RE HOPELESS.

WHO CARES?

STANDBAR

Sometimes I spent the night out.

スタンドバア 京橋屋

*Stand bar Kyobashi-ya

WHY DOES HE DRINK?

By the evening of the third day, I began to feel some compunctions about my behavior, and I returned to Shizuko's apartment.

I was so hard-pressed for money that I took Shizuko's clothes to a pawnshop...

...and went drinking in Ginza two nights in a row away from home.

NOT NECESSARILY, BUT...

I'M SURE DADDY WILL BE SURPRISED.

IT'S BE-CAUSE HE'S TOO GOOD...

DO ALL GOOD PEOPLE DRINK?

IT'S NOT BECAUSE HE LIKES LIQUOR.

HURRY, CATCH IT!

MAYBE HE WON'T LIKE IT.

AH!

YES, ISN'T IT?

JUST LIKE SEKKACHI PIN-CHAN.

BOING

The two of them...

They were happy.

HEE HEE HEE!

HA HA HA!

Hear my prayer!

God, if you listen to the prayers of people like myself, grant them happiness. If you only hear me once in my whole life, this will be enough!

A good mother and child.

I'd been a fool to come between them. I might destroy them both if I were not careful.

KACHAK

HYOOOOO

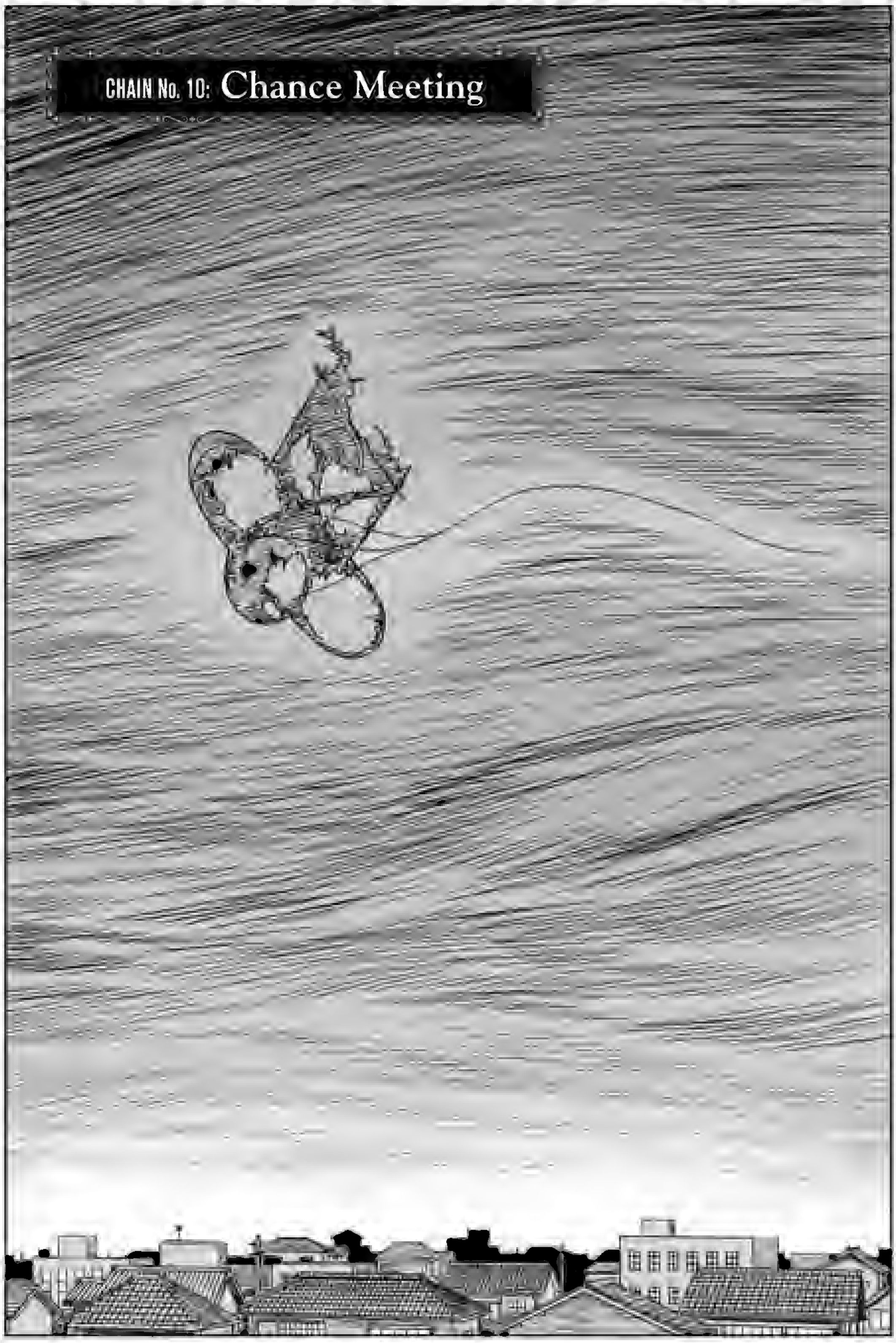
SNAF

HYOOOOOO

After that...

...I did not return to Shizuko's apartment.

CHAIN No. 10: Chance Meeting



I felt as though I were beginning to acquire some vague notion of what it meant.

Society...

People cannot conceive of any means of survival except in terms of a single then-and-there contest.

It is the struggle between one individual and another, a then-and-there struggle.

The incomprehensibility of society is the incomprehensibility of the individual.

Even once the individual's needs have been met, again the individual comes in.

The ocean is not society; it is individuals.

They speak of duty to one's country, but the object of their efforts is invariably the individual.

SLIDE

屋橋京

STANDBAR

スタンドバア 京橋屋

WELL...

SINCE IT'S YOU, YO-CHAN...

I'VE LEFT HER AND COME TO YOU.

...

...and from that night I lodged myself on the second floor of the Standbar in Kyobashi.

It was enough. In other words, my single then-and-there contest had been decided...

YOU OWED YOUR GIRLFRIEND IN KOENJI QUITE A DEBT, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU REALLY ARE HOPELESS, YOCHAN.

YOU'RE ADOR-ABLE.

THERE YOU GO, TALKING NONSENSE AGAIN.

THIS WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO TO PAY HER BACK.

I LEFT HER *BECAUSE* I OWE HER A DEBT.

TREAT ME LIKE A SLAVE.

WORK ME HARD IN THE BAR.

YES, PLEASE DON'T.

I GUESS I'D BEST NOT HAVE YOU IN DEBT TO ME.

スタンドバア
京橋屋

HMM. YOCHAN, EH?

NAME'S YOCHAN. BE NICE TO HIM.

SAY, MADAM, THAT YOUNG MAN'S ALWAYS HERE. WHO IS HE ANYWAY?

THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU.

AAH...

DON'T SIT IN THE CORNER. HOW ABOUT YOU COME DRINK OVER HERE?

YOCHAN!

HA HA HA!!

HA HA HA HA!!

WHAT'S A FINE LAD DOING IN A SEEDY PLACE LIKE THIS?

MY. NOW THAT I GET A GOOD LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE QUITE THE MAN.

WELL, SORRY FOR BEING RUN-DOWN.

AAAH.

THERE WE GO.

CAREFUL YOU DON'T SLIP.

AH, YOCHAN, YOU'VE DRUNK QUITE A LOT AGAIN TONIGHT.

THUD

HM? WHAT IS IT?

SAY?

MADAM ?

GOODNESS. YOU DO TAKE SOME MINDING, HM?

THAT'S RIGHT.

...YES.

...IS NOT SUCH A DREADFUL PLACE... HM?

THE WORLD...

SNRR

SNRR

...namely...

My feelings of panic...

...or the tapeworm, fluke and heaven knows what eggs that lurk in raw fish and in undercooked beef and pork.

...of the hundreds of thousands of whooping-cough germs borne by the spring breezes...

...the swarms of scabious parasites infecting the leather straps in the subway cars...

AAAH!

PIRK

...a tiny sliver of glass may penetrate the sole of your foot...

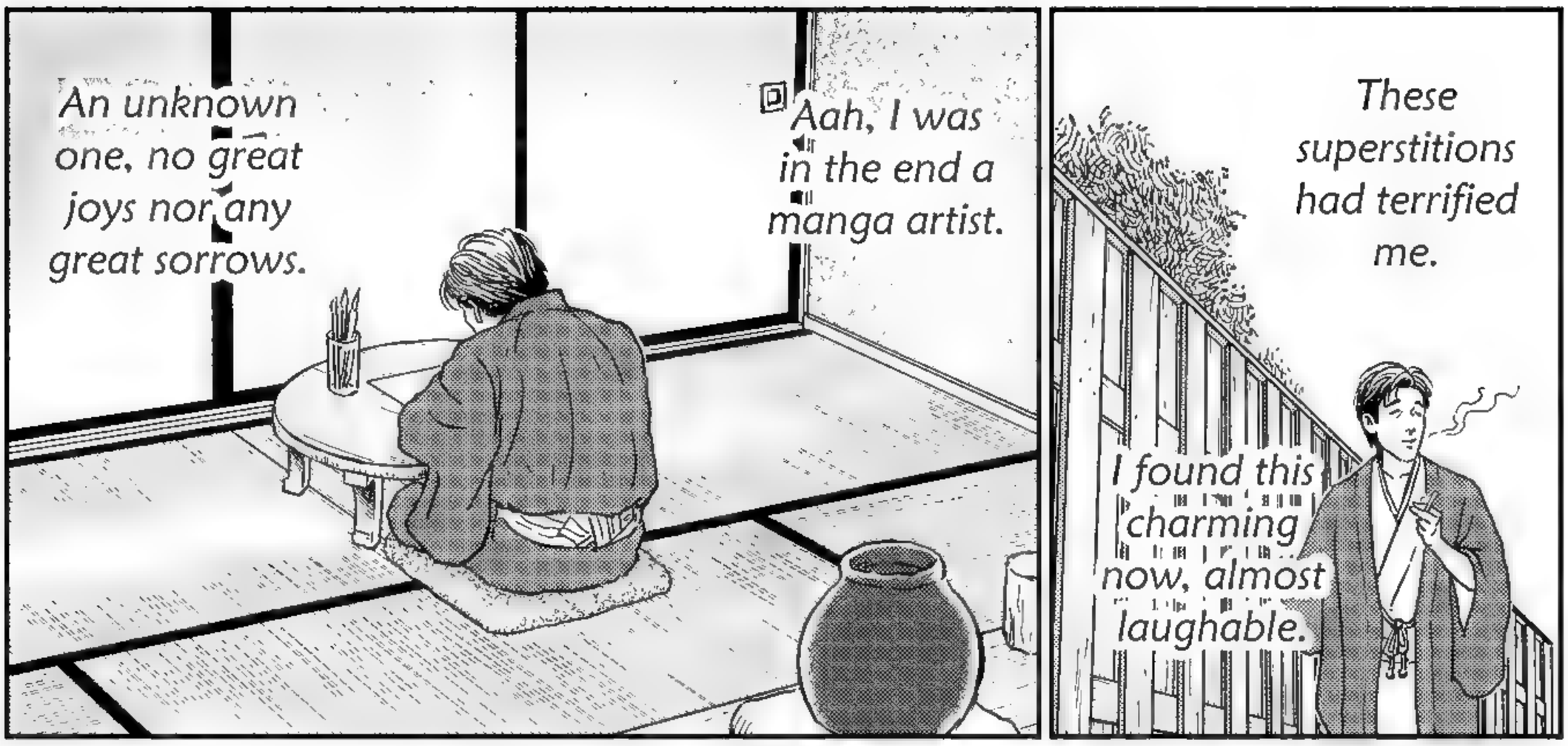
Or the fact that if you walk barefoot...

...eventually...

...and after circulating through your body...

However, if you ignore them completely they at once become vanishing ghosts of science.

My panic was molded by the unholy fear aroused in me by such superstitions of science.



Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape

Of This and That endeavor and dispute
Than sadden after none, or bitter Fruit
(Rubaiyat)

That said, I was still afraid of human beings.

...chatting aimlessly with the customers after work, and liquor.

My pleasures were...

YOCHAN'S STARTING WITH HIS THEORIES OF ART AGAIN.

The desire to see frightening things, my proclamations to the customers of my drunken theories...

THAT SO? GHOSTS ARE ART THEN?

THE MOST PRIMITIVE, STRIKING THING IN ART IS PRECISELY PAINTINGS OF GHOSTS.

SURE.

STANDBAR

THAT'S RIGHT! I ONCE PAINTED A MASTER-PIECE MYSELF!

WOULD THAT I COULD SHOW YOU!

GO AND GET A PACK OF HOPE FROM THE TOBACCO SHOP ACROSS THE WAY.

COME ON, YOCHAN.

COMING!

YOSHIKO, HONEY!

TOBACCO

YOU HERE?

GOODNESS, YOZO.

YOU CAN'T GO ON, DRINKING EVERY DAY FROM MORNING TO NIGHT.

"LOSE YOUR FINGERS IN THE TRESSES OF THE CYPRESS-SLENDER MINISTER OF WINE."

"BETTER BE MERRY WITH THE FRUITFUL GRAPE THAN SADDEN AFTER NONE, OR BITTER, FRUIT."

WHY IS IT BAD?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DRINKING?

GO AHEAD.

NO, I DON'T.

DO YOU UNDER-STAND?

I'M GOING TO KISS YOU.

HOW STUPID YOU ARE.

...which marked her as a virgin who had never been defiled.

There was something unmistakable in Yoshiko's expression...

YOU AND YOUR IDEAS OF CHASTITY ...

NOBAR

YOU SILLY FOOL.

...

No... I mustn't.

SEE YOU LATER, YOSHIKO.

I didn't have the right to defile this innocent.

KAWHUP

"ON THE RIVER BANK A WILLOW TREE—"

"WHAT IS THERE TO FRET OVER?"

青山靴店

Soon after New Year's, one night in the dead of winter...

AAH, IT'S FREEZ-ING!

"MAN'S LIFE IS LIKE A FLOWING RIVER..."

GOODNESS! WHAT A MESS. HANG ON, YOZO.

TOBACCO

たばこ

OW OW OW!!

YOSHIKO! HELP!!

AAAH, YOU GAVE ME A FRIGHT.

PHEW.

HERE WE GO!

YOU DRINK TOO MUCH.

YOZO.

OW OW- OW OW.

OF COURSE.

...WILL YOU MARRY ME, YOSHIKO?

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. IF I GIVE IT UP...

DO YOU MEAN IT?

I'M GIVING IT UP. FROM TOMORROW ON I WON'T TOUCH A DROP.

The next day, as might have been expected...

...I spent drinking.

LET'S HOOK FINGERS. I PROMISE I'LL GIVE IT UP.

I GOT DRUNK.

YOSHIKO, I'M SORRY.

TOBACCO

I'M NOT PRETENDING.

NO, IT'S THE TRUTH.

OH, YOU'RE AWFUL. TRYING TO FOOL ME BY PRETENDING TO BE DRUNK.

IT'S JUST THE SUNSET SHINING ON IT. DON'T TRY TO FOOL ME.

NO, I'M NOT QUALIFIED. LOOK AT MY FACE. RED, ISN'T IT? I'VE BEEN DRINKING.

YOU'RE A GOOD ACTOR.

I'M GOING TO KISS YOU.

I'M NOT ACTING, YOU LITTLE IDIOT.

GO AHEAD.

I-IT'S NOT JUST THAT. I'VE BEEN SLEEPING WITH THE MADAM.

...

WE MADE A PINKIE PROMISE.

YOU PROMISED YESTERDAY YOU WOULDN'T DRINK.

LIES, LIES, LIES!

大屋敷織の令弟 鎌倉で心中を図る

女は逃れ 男性も自ら重傷

満島の親族 呆然として死骸と対面

夫の不在に続け 不貞の果ての情死

AND I TRIED TO COMMIT LOVERS' SUICIDE IN KAMAKURA. I MADE A WOMAN DIE. IT WAS IN THE PAPERS. YOU MUST HAVE HEARD.

SUCH LIES!

I had always imagined the beauty of virginity was nothing more than the illusion of stupid poets.

But it really is alive in this world.

This girl before me was a genius at trusting people.

What a holy thing uncorrupted virginity is.

...no matter how immense...

...the suffering that might ensue.

Aah, I wanted once in my lifetime to know a great savage joy...

WE'RE GETTING MARRIED.

MADAM.

I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

YOU ARE?

Filled with a joy I had never before felt.

Spring came at last.

OH! LOOK!

HOW WONDER-FUL!

TOK

TOK

TOK

At the time, however, I was so full of joy that it was near impossible to understand this.

Was this... an ill omen of the tragic sorrow to come later?

LIFT YOUR FACE.

YOSHI-KO.

I'M NOTHING MUCH...

BUT I'M HAPPY TO BE YOUR WIFE.

HAAH...

HAAH...

AH...

AH!

CHAIN No. 11: An Unexpected Visitor

AAAH !!

AAAH !!

This uncorrupted virginity… I now keenly felt…

…this lovely bud unfolding into a divine flower.

SHK

SHK

In the apartment we rented near the Sumida River...

...we began our life as newlyweds.

HM? YOZO?

WHAT ARE YOU PAINTING?

I gave up drink and devoted my energies to drawing manga.

And on the side I painted portraits.

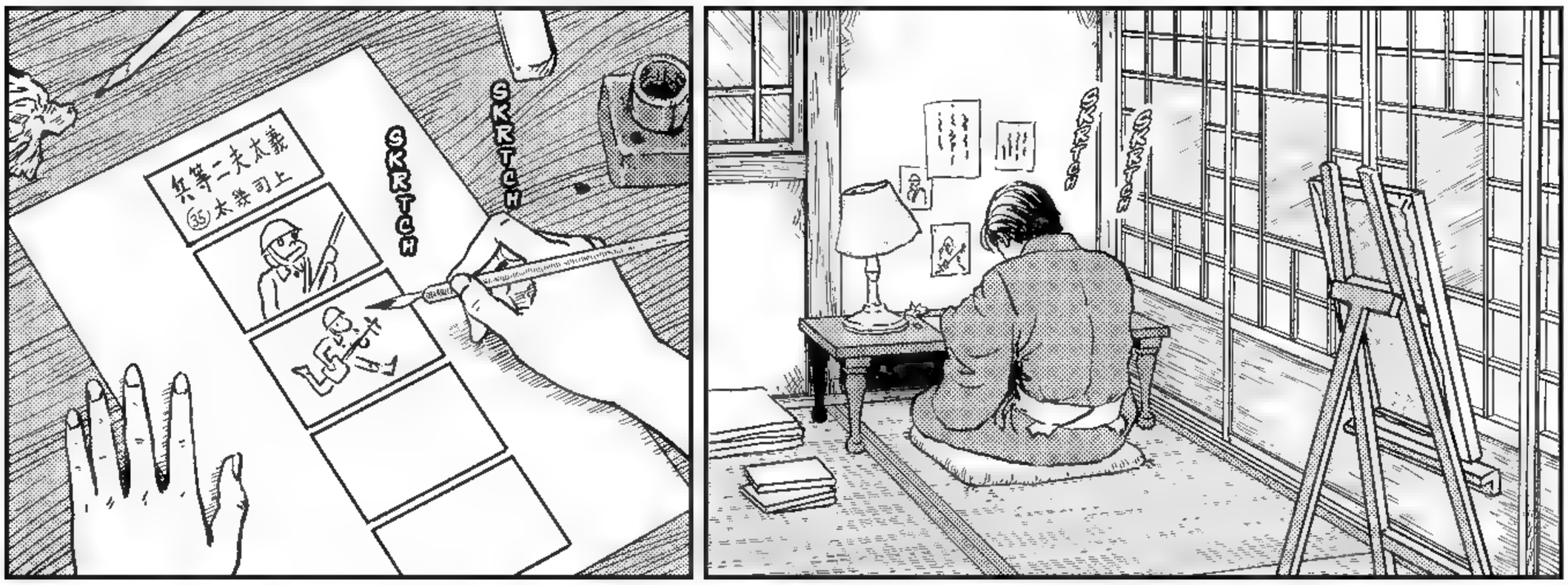
Pleasant days...

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK UNTIL IT'S FINISHED.

IT'S A SECRET.

I CAN HARDLY WAIT!

Gidayu Nitohei (Puppet Theater Private) by Ikita Joshi



A MANGA BREAKING NEW GROUND AT OUR PAPER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

SOMEONE LIKE ME PERHAPS ...

AAH... BUT...

WHAT ?!

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

A TOP-RATE PAPER LIKE THE *DAILY MORNING*, WELL...

AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M A SHABBY, INDECENT, THIRD-RATE ARTIST.

...

CRITICS SHOULD BE TAKING YOUR WORK SERIOUSLY.

I'VE HAD A KEEN EYE ON YOU, MR. JOSHI.

OH, THANK YOU, MA'AM. VERY KIND OF YOU.

PLEASE. HAVE SOME TEA.

IT'S JUST A WAY TO KILL TIME.

WHAT? OH, WELL.

I SEE THAT YOU ALSO PAINT.

THANK YOU.

PLEASE, TAKE YOUR TIME.

THEY SAY THAT AN ARTIST'S TRUE NATURE COMES OUT IN HIS LEISURE TIME.

I'D LOVE TO TAKE A LOOK.

AH!

NO, IT'S TOO EMBARRASS-ING. AND IT'S STILL NOT FINISHED...

IT'S DEFINITELY HER IN THIS PAINTING, BUT THERE'S ALSO A "FEMME FATALE" ASPECT TO IT.

THIS IS YOUR WIFE, YES?

IT'S A BIT EMBARRASSING TO SAY MYSELF, BUT SHE IS AN ANGEL, UNTOUCHED BY CORRUPTION.

OF COURSE NOT! MY WIFE IS THE TOTAL OPPOSITE.

A FEARSOME, EVIL WOMAN WHO SEDUCES AND CAPTIVATES ANY NUMBER OF MEN, TWISTING THEIR FATES TO DESTROY THEM...

AND YET, WHEN I PAINT HER, IT TURNS OUT LIKE THIS...

DOES THAT LOVELY WIFE OF YOURS APPEAR THIS WAY TO YOU?

MR. OBA.

MR. JOSHI— NO.

I'M EXCELLENT AT PAINTING GHOSTS. SO I MAKE GHOSTS OF EVERYTHING.

ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY, I CAN ONLY PAINT GHOSTS.

WHAT ?!

I KNOW YOU'LL BECOME A GREAT PAINTER!

I SEE AN EXTRAORDI-NARY GENIUS IN YOUR PAINTING.

...A GREAT PAINTER SOMEDAY.

YOU'LL BE...

NO, I'M COMPLETELY SERIOUS.

I-IMPOSSIBLE... PLEASE DON'T TEASE ME, MR. AOKI.

THIS PIECE TRUTHFULLY DEPICTS YOUR INNER WORLD.

AND HOW *PARTICULAR* THAT INNER WORLD IS!!

SUCH AS WITH VAN GOGH, OR MUNCH, OR GOYA.

TRULY EXCELLENT ART STRONGLY REFLECTS THE PARTICULAR INNER WORLD OF THE ARTIST.

THIS GHOST IS YOU.

IT ***DOES*** LOOK JUST LIKE YOU, AFTER ALL.

AND ABOUT THAT PAINTING.

...FOR OUR PAPER.

WELL THEN, MR. IKITA JOSHI, I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR SERIES...

Y-YES...

It was a place where artists with new styles and ideas came to the attention of the art world.

The Nika Art Exhibition was an art show put on by the Nika Association, which split from the Ministry of Education Art Exhibition in 1914.

PERHAPS THE NIKA ART EXHIBI-TION?

I WOULD URGE YOU TO SUBMIT IT TO A PUBLIC EXHIBIT.

NIKA?!

WHAT?! REALLY?!

YOZO, I SPLURGED ON A BEEF HOT POT TONIGHT.

HM? WHO COULD THAT BE AT THIS HOUR?

KNOCK KNOCK

TODAY'S SPECIAL. WE SHOULD CELEBRATE.

I...I'M GOING TO WORK HARD...

YOSHI-KO.

OH! WELL, IF IT ISN'T THE MADAM...

WHAT'S THE MATTER AT THIS HOUR?

KLATTER

WHO'S THERE?

A VISITOR SUDDENLY CAME TO SEE YOU, SO I SHOWED HIM HERE.

I'M SORRY, YOCHAN.

WHO?

...A VISITOR?

FATHER.

F—

YOZO.

...WELCOME ME INTO YOUR FAMILY.

I DO HOPE YOU WILL...

THIS IS YOSHIKO.

FATHER, I GOT MARRIED.

UH-UH-HUH...

AND YOSHIKO HERE IS A GOOD GIRL—

NOW, SIR, YOZO IS REALLY DOING HIS BEST.

COULD YOU PLEASE BE QUIET?

...REALLY FIT TO HAVE A FAMILY OF YOUR OWN?

IS A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING LIKE YOU...

YES. THE *DAILY MORNING* NEWS-PAPER ACTUALLY—

MANGA?

I'M MAKING A LIVING OFF MY MANGA NOW.

...

ER. UH...

I DID NOT RAISE YOU TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST!!

MANGA IS NO OCCUPATION FOR A PROPER YOUNG MAN!

FATHER, I'VE MADE SOME TEA.

And so my father's stay began.

My father came on the best day of my life.

This brought me nothing but confusion as I assumed I'd been disowned long ago.

I'M SO SORRY!

YES!

MAKE IT AGAIN.

IT'S TEPID.

SIP SIP

WHAT?

YOU INTEND TO SERVE ME AT A TABLE LIKE THIS?

IT APPEARS YOUR WIFE HAS NO MANNERS.

YOZO.

FATHER, SUPPER IS READY.

WE DON'T HAVE ANOTHER TABLE. BUT I'LL MAKE SURE TO GET ONE TOMORROW!

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY...

...THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD TO DINE AT A PRIVATE TABLE.

IN THE OBA HOUSE, THE CUSTOM IS FOR...

...

I WILL GO AND GET A TABLE STRAIGHTAWAY. PLEASE DO HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.

FATHER, PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

I'M GOING TO BED!

ENOUGH.

SWISH

I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY.

I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU DID NOT DRY MY KIMONO ON SUCH A FILTHY RACK.

YOSHIKO, WASN'T IT?

...

YOU'RE A FAILURE AS A DAUGHTER OF THE OBA FAMILY.

ENOUGH. I WILL TAKE IT TO A LAUNDERER.

SOB SOB ...

SOB!

SOB SOB SOB!

MA'AM.

YES... IT'S NOTHING.

MR. AOKI.

PLEASE DRY YOUR TEARS.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

MA'AM.

YOU REALLY ARE KIND-HEARTED.

MA'AM...

THANK YOU...

YOSHIKO.

I DON'T CARE!

AH!

YOSHIKO! YOSHIKO!

HAAH

HAAH

YOUR FATHER WILL HEAR US.

YOZO, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU TONIGHT?

YOZO.

YOZO!

ARE YOU *REALLY* AN ANGEL? WERE YOU AN UNCORRUPTED VIRGIN?

YOSHI-KO.

AAH!

HOW MANY MEN HAVE YOU SLEPT WITH?!

HOW MANY MEN HAVE YOU TRICKED SO FAR?!

YOU'RE LYING. COME CLEAN.

WHY ARE YOU SAYING THIS?! I DON'T UNDER-STAND!

AN EVIL WOMAN WHO DECEIVES MEN. AREN'T YOU?!

YOU'RE ACTUALLY A FEMME FATALE ...

NOW, CONFESS !!

I CAUSED A WOMAN'S DEATH IN KAMAKURA. THE LAST TIME WE HAD SEX WAS FANTASTIC.

I'VE SLEPT WITH ALL KINDS OF WOMEN, YOU KNOW.

IT'S ALL TRUE. AND YOU'RE THE SAME, AREN'T YOU?

I SLEPT WITH THE MADAM AT THE BAR. AND I HAD A WOMAN IN KOENJI.

WILL YOU NOT TELL ME?!

YOU SLEPT WITH AOKI, DIDN'T YOU?

...ALL RIGHT THEN. I'LL SAY IT FOR YOU!

OR MAYBE THIS?!

DID YOU DO THIS?

AAH

SAY IT. YOU DID DISGUSTING THINGS WITH AOKI, DIDN'T YOU?

WHAT SORTS OF THINGS DID YOU DO?

THE WAY YOU LOOK AT AOKI!!

LIAR!!

I KNOW THE TRUTH!!

I-I DIDN'T...

AAAH !!

TELL ME!!

SAY IT!!

HA...

I DID IT WITH MR. AOKI.

I DID.

!

HA HA HA...

YOSHIKO
...
Y—

I DID NO SUCH THING...

PLIP

THAT'S A LIE...

DOES IT MAKE YOU HAPPY TO SAY SUCH THINGS?

I WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING WITH MR. AOKI. WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?

CHAIN No. 12: Fleeting Glory

YOSHI-KO...

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I LOVE.

I'M SORRY.

I WAS WRONG.

I'M SORRY.

WAAAH!!

SOB SOB ...

YOZO!

...I would do magnificent work!!

SKRTCH SKRTCH

I made a decision.

This time, I would become an honest man.

And for the sake of my innocent wife!..

BRING HIM IN.

MR. AOKI IS HERE.

YOZO!

NOT TOO BAD, HM?

MR. AOKI, I'VE PUT TOGETHER AN OUTLINE. THE TITLE IS *THE CLOWNING CORPORAL*.

...

...THE EDITOR SUDDENLY SHELVED THE PROJECT.

BUT THE MANGA SERIES I ASKED YOU ABOUT THE OTHER DAY...

THIS IS TERRIBLY DIFFICULT TO SAY.

THE TRUTH IS, MR. JOSHI...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "SHELVED"?

W-WAIT JUST A MOMENT.

WHAT?

...

THE TRUTH IS, HE SAYS...

CER-TAINLY.

OH...

COULD YOU GIVE US A MOMENT?

MA'AM.

...THERE'S AN UNFORTUNATE CLOUD ON YOUR RECORDS.

AHEM

PUSH

...

A LOVERS' SUICIDE WITH A WOMAN OR SOME SUCH...

FORGIVE MY IMPERTI-NENCE, BUT IT APPEARS YOU WERE IN SOME TROUBLE IN THE PAST?

AN UNFOR-TUNATE CLOUD...?

MY RECORDS...

BUT HE HAD HIS SIGHTS SET ON ANOTHER ARTIST ALREADY.

IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

I SAID HE WAS BEING RIDICULOUS! AS LONG AS THE WORK IS GOOD, AN ARTIST'S PAST HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYTHING!

I WAS OUT-RAGED.

THE EDITOR SAID WE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM EMPLOYING SUCH PEOPLE AT OUR PAPER.

BASICALLY, HE'S CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION.

*Arts Division

WHO IS THIS OTHER ARTIST?

SO...

HE'S STILL A NEW-COMER.

RIGHT.

IS THAT HOW IT IS THEN...?

AAH...

...

MASAO HORIKI?!

MASAO HORIKI...

HIS NAME IS MASAO HORIKI.

WHAT...

YES ...

OH... NO...

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

BUT HIS RELENT-LESSLY CHEERFUL MANGA ARE APPARENTLY QUITE POPULAR LATELY.

YES, HE STARTED OUT WITH MAGAZINE ILLUSTRA-TIONS.

YOU MUST STOP YOUR FOOLING AROUND WITH WOMEN.

IS THE LADY-KILLER AT HOME?

YOU'VE GONE FAR ENOUGH. SOCIETY WON'T STAND FOR MORE.

CAN YOU LEND ME FIVE YEN?

Lend Me Five Yen No.12 by Masao Horiki

五圓拜借

第十二回

堀木正雄

1

THIS IS HORIKI'S WORK.

...THERE'S NO MIS-TAKE.

*Bookstore
Banner: *Modern Economics* complete set
Sign: Collection of long fiction

書店

現代經濟學全集

長篇小說全集

一冊壹円 上製極美本

He squeezed me dry once already. Why does he have to take from me again now?

My fresh start, the future that looked so bright... Of all people, Horiki. That city good-for-nothing...

I'D REJECT A PAPER LIKE THAT MYSELF.

MM. IT DOESN'T MATTER ANYMORE.

SO IS THE NEWSPAPER NOT GOING TO HAPPEN?

THEY'LL NO DOUBT REGRET IT.

THEY'VE NO TASTE. KICKING ME TO THE CURB!

YOU'RE NOT COMING TO BED?

WHAT ARE YOU WRITING?

RIGHT! YOU CAN DO YOUR WONDERFUL WORK SOMEWHERE ELSE.

YOU GO AHEAD TO BED.

NO, IT'S FINE!

OH GOODNESS... I COULD HAVE HELPED.

JUST SUMMER GREETING CARDS. I'LL BE DONE SOON.

FLIP FLIP

OH.

I'LL JUST GO DROP THEM IN THE POSTBOX.

WELL, THAT'S THE LOT OF THEM.

WHAT? NOW?

FWP

THIS IS TO THE *DAILY MORNING* ARTS DIVISION?

OH!

YOU DROPPED ONE...

謹啓　毎朝新聞ヲ、イツモタノシク
ハイドクシテオリマス小學生デス。コノ
願フ事アッテ、一筆オ便リスル次第デス。
貴紙ノ連載マンガデスガ、次ハ
上司幾太先生ノ登場ヲ
先生ガ大ボス二及ボス所ヲ貴紙ニ
多大ナルモノト思ハレマス。コノ
小學生ノ願ヒ、是非トモ
聞キマスヤウニ。

*Dear *Daily Morning* newspaper, I am in elementary school. I always enjoy reading your paper. I had a request for you so I am sending this card now. I would very much like to see Mr. Ikita Joshi draw your next manga series. I believe he could offer a lot to your newspaper. I hope you will please listen to the request of this elementary school student.

WHAT IS THIS?

WHAT A DESPICABLE LAD.

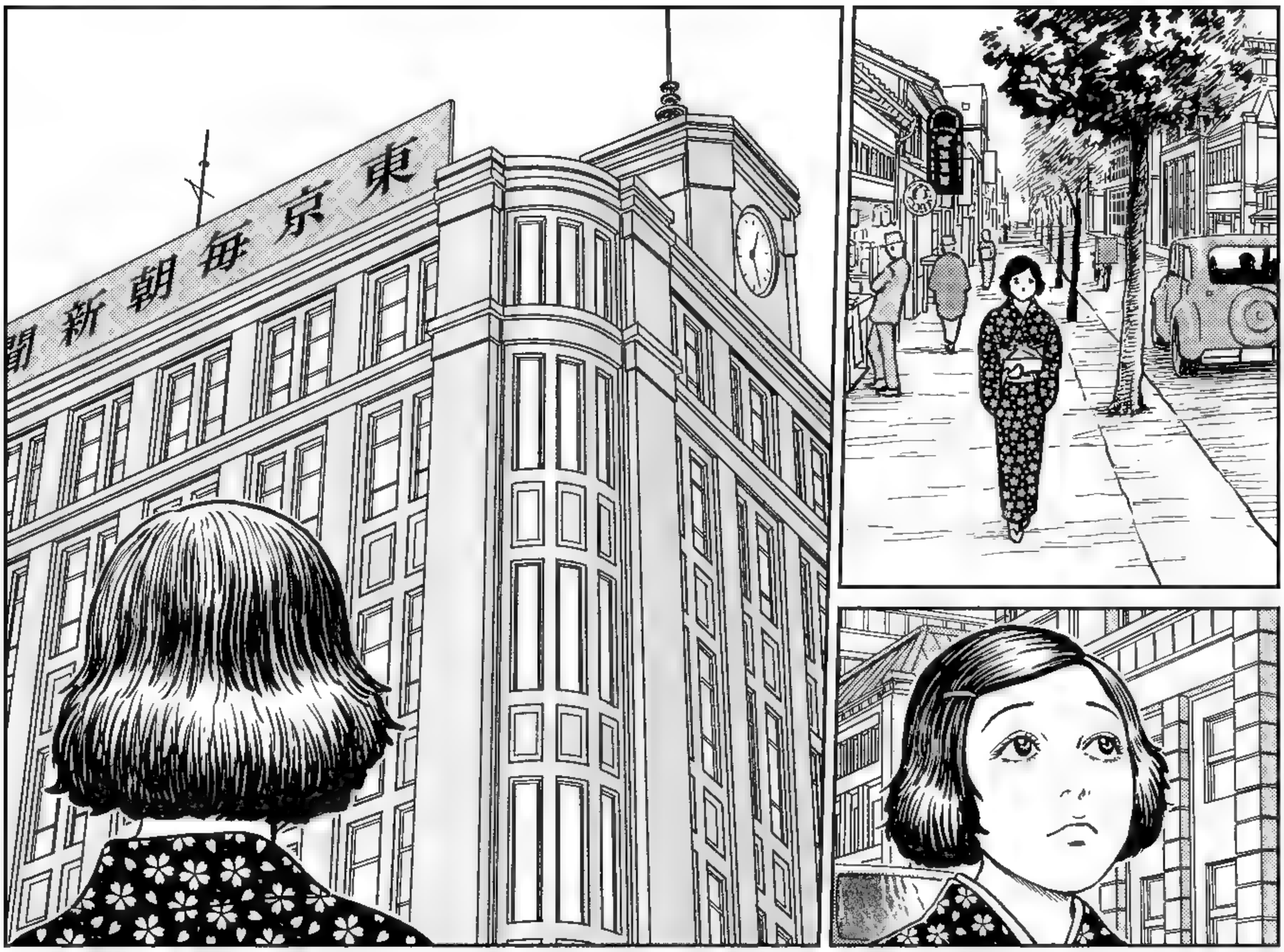
CREATING OTHER PERSONAS SIMPLY TO PROMOTE HIMSELF. EVEN INSOLENCE HAS ITS LIMITS.

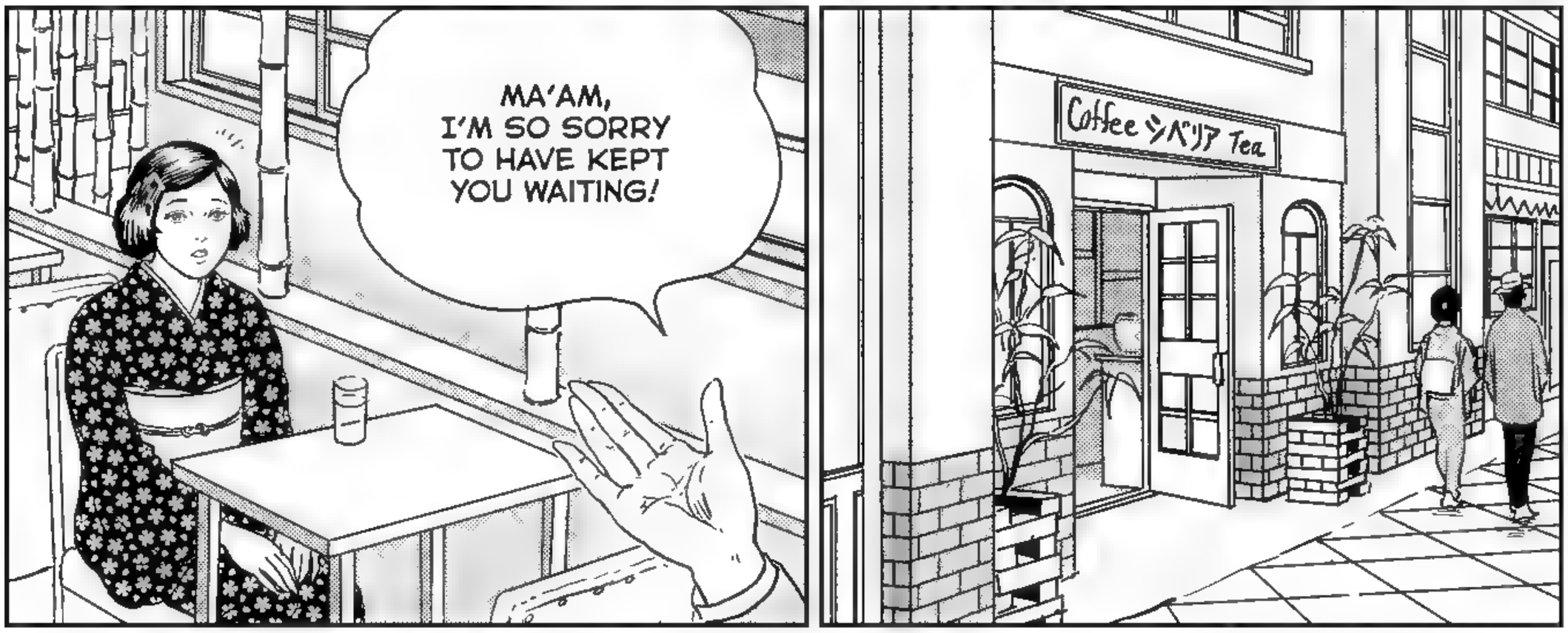
FATHER...

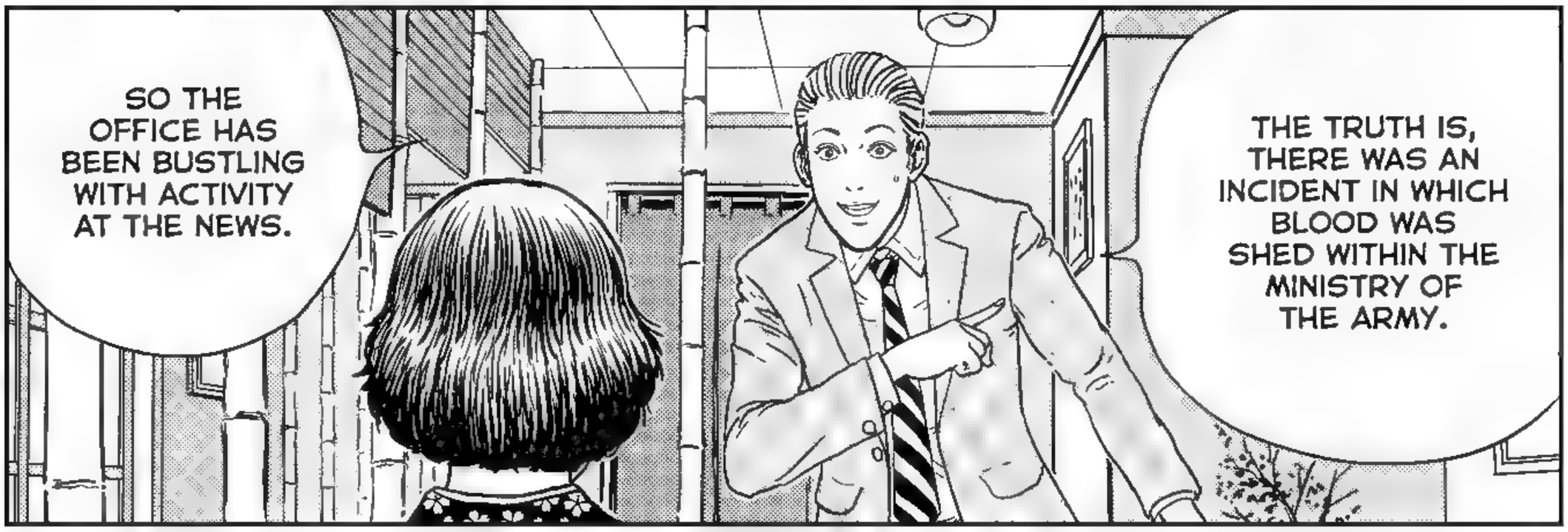
...

SUCH A DISAGREE-ABLE CHARAC-TER. WHO DOES HE TAKE AFTER?!

*Tokyo Daily Morning Newspaper







IT'S ABOUT MY HUSBAND.

THE TRUTH IS...

NO, NO, IT'S FINE. I'M IN THE ARTS DIVISION ANYWAY.

MR. AOKI, I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHEN YOU'RE BUSY.

NOTHING'S DECIDED YET, BUT I'M DOING EVERYTHING I CAN.

I'M TERRIBLY SORRY TO HAVE WORRIED YOU ABOUT THIS MATTER ALONG WITH YOUR HUSBAND.

I SUPPOSE... THERE'S REALLY NO HOPE OF THAT SERIES?

THE POSTMARK IS SHIMBASHI, SO SHE MUST HAVE SENT IT WHILE ON A TRIP TO TOKYO.

THIS ONE'S QUITE A PASSIONATE FAN LETTER. FROM A GIRL IN HOKKAIDO.

A NUMBER OF POSTCARDS REQUESTING MR. JOSHI HAVE COME IN FROM READERS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

OH, YES, RIGHT! I'VE GOTTEN UNEXPECTED REINFORCE-MENTS.

THERE'S EVEN ONE FROM OKINAWA!

THIS ONE'S FROM A 70-YEAR-OLD PERSON IN OSAKA...

HM? ALL WITH A SHIMBASHI POSTMARK?

THANK YOU SO MUCH.

MR. AOKI.

WELL, AT ANY RATE, READERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE ROOTING FOR YOUR HUSBAND!

AND ABOVE ALL ELSE, I BELIEVE THAT MR. JOSHI'S GENIUS MUST NOT BE HIDDEN AWAY.

ALL RIGHT.

I WANT THIS TO COME OFF WITHOUT A HITCH!

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO CONVINCE THE EDITOR.

MA'AM...

...SO, SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

THANK YOU...

PHEW.

SIP
SIP

LA
LA LA
LA!

CHAK
CHAK

DO
DEE
DOOO!

LA
DEE
DO!

TRA
LA
LA!

SUCH CHEER.

...HMM.

TRA LA LA!

HM? NO, NOTHING SPECIAL.

DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?

YOSHIKO... YOU SEEM QUITE PLEASED.

BUT EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT NOW.

AND WHAT IF I AM?

OH MY! ARE YOU WRITING MORE SUMMER POSTCARDS?

I... NO, I'M NOT.

THAT'S STRANGE. YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING.

YOU SAY THE STRANGEST THINGS. WHAT IS ALL RIGHT NOW?

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WON'T TELL ME?!

WHAT? ...OH, NOTHING.

SO HONEY, IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.

I'M SURE THEY'LL CHOOSE YOUR SERIES.

!

IT'S ABOUT THE SERIES FOR THE *DAILY MORNING.*

MR. AOKI... SAID IT'S GOING TO COME OFF WITHOUT A HITCH!

I-I'M SORRY.

SO YOU WERE LYING WHEN YOU SAID YOU WENT TO YOUR PARENTS'?!

T- TODAY...

WHAT? WHEN DID YOU SEE AOKI?!

YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED OUT OF IT!

MR. AOKI WAS ALSO VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT YOU AND YOUR WORK.

I...WAS WORRIED. I WENT TO THE NEWSPAPER OFFICES.

YOZO!!

SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE BLOCKS THE TRUE PATH...

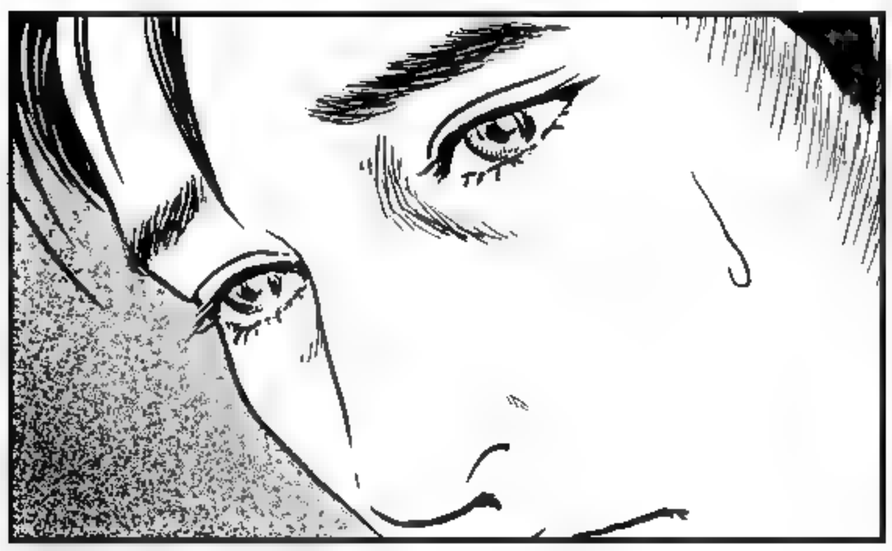
YOU ARE AN UTTER FOOL.

!

LOOK AT THIS!

*Tokyo Daily Morning News Headline:
Nagata General Office Director of Army Assassinated in the Office.
Suspect is a Lieutenant Colonel.

*Notice
Beginning on September 1, the morning edition will begin a new manga series *Mr. Pathos* drawn by promising young artist Mr. Masao Horiki.



PRESSURE FROM THE WEST HAS INCREASED EVER SINCE THE MUKDEN INCIDENT. THE SITUATION IS ENTIRELY UNPREDICTABLE.

RIGHT NOW, JAPAN IS AT A HISTORICAL TURNING POINT.

IF WE TRAIN OUR MINDS, DEVOTE OURSELVES TO OUR STUDIES AND IMMERSE OURSELVES IN MEDITATION, AND CARRY OUT OUR EVERY ACT WHOLEHEARTEDLY, WE CAN MOVE EVEN MOUNTAINS!!

THE ISSUE IS WHAT THE MEN OF JAPAN SHOULD DO FOR THIS NATION.

IT IS MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER BEFORE THAT WE COME TOGETHER AS ONE AS A NATION!

YOU BRING SHAME TO THE OBA FAMILY!

YOUR LIFE HAS NO VALUE!!

AND YET WHAT IS THIS LIFE OF YOURS?

USE THIS. DIE.

DIE.

WHOK

HOWEVER... IF THERE WAS...

...JUST ONE WAY TO SAVE YOU...

AS A FATHER, I AM DEEPLY ASHAMED AT HAVING RAISED SOMEONE SUCH AS YOURSELF.

YOU HAVE MADE MISTAKES IN THE PAST, BUT YOU LIVE ON CAREFREE WITHOUT SETTLING THOSE ACCOUNTS.

Y- YES!

YOSHIKO.

PLEASE... TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM.

I HOPE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE THERE FOR YOZO.

BUT YOU BEING WITH HIM IS HIS ONLY SALVATION.

YOSHIKO, HE REALLY IS A TERRIBLE MAN.

BOTH OF YOU, BE WELL.

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY LENGTHY STAY.

I SHALL RETURN HOME TO-MORROW.

FATHER ...

F—

PSHAK

COMING!

WHAT COULD IT BE AT THIS HOUR?

TELE-GRAAAAM!

MR. OBAAAA!

IT'S FROM YOUR OLDER BROTHER. STRANGE.

WHO'S IT FROM?

...

FATHER IS HERE WITH US, ISN'T HE?

WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?

電報送達紙

OUR FATHER GENNO-SUKE FELL ILL LAST WEEK...

...AND IS CURRENTLY IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

FATHER?

KLAK

The inner room was chilly, no sign of human warmth.

There was not even a trace of my father and his bags.

But the dagger he had pulled out...

...sat there still, glittering coolly on the tatami mats.

CHAIN No. 13: Tragicomic

...with an unfamiliar guest in tow.

...Mr. Aoki from the newspaper came by...

The manga series was gone as if it had all been a dream, and I learned of my father's illness.

I passed the days in gloomy introspection until one day...

...I'M SO SORRY MY EFFORTS WERE INSUFFICIENT.

...

I EXPENDED EVERY EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE EDITOR, BUT...

...THAT OUR PAPER COULD NOT RUN YOUR MANGA SERIES AFTER ALL.

MR. JOSHI, I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN TRULY APOLOGIZE...

MR. SHUSHUN TAKITO.

I'VE BROUGHT WITH ME A DISTINGUISHED ART CRITIC.

I THOUGHT HE MIGHT TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR OIL PAINTING, MR. JOSHI— NO, MR. OBA, WHICH IS THE REASON WE'RE HERE TODAY.

MR. TAKITO IS A SCHOLAR OF SURREALISM.

YOU'RE VERY WELCOME TO COME IN.

PLEASE, THIS WAY...

THIS IS MR. OBA'S PIECE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

...I HAVE DISCOVERED A RARE TALENT!

IN THIS...

AOKI.

YES?

IF I MAY OFFER ONE PIECE OF ADVICE...

THERE IS A LONGING FOR DEATH, A THIRST FOR LIFE, THERE IS TRAGEDY. THERE IS COMEDY.

HERE, THERE IS ANXIETY, THERE IS FEAR, THERE IS MADNESS.

I CAN SEE SO MUCH OF THE MAD DANCE OF BUFFOONERY IN HELL. THESE ARE MONSTERS IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!!

IF YOU DO, GLORY WILL AT LAST BE YOURS AT THE NIKA EXHIBIT!!

APPLY YOURSELF AND COMPLETE A SERIOUS, LARGE PIECE!!

...A GREAT PAINTER SOME DAY.

YOU'LL BE...

TO THAT END, PLEASE PAINT A LARGE PIECE ON A CANVAS THAT'S A SIZE 50—NO, A SIZE 100!

MR. OBA, LET US MEET AT THE NIKA SHOW.

H-HONEY...

I KNEW I WASN'T WRONG ABOUT YOU!

I'M SO GLAD I BROUGHT MR. TAKITO.

STAGGER

YOU HAVE A FUTURE AS A FINE ARTIST!

MR. OBA.

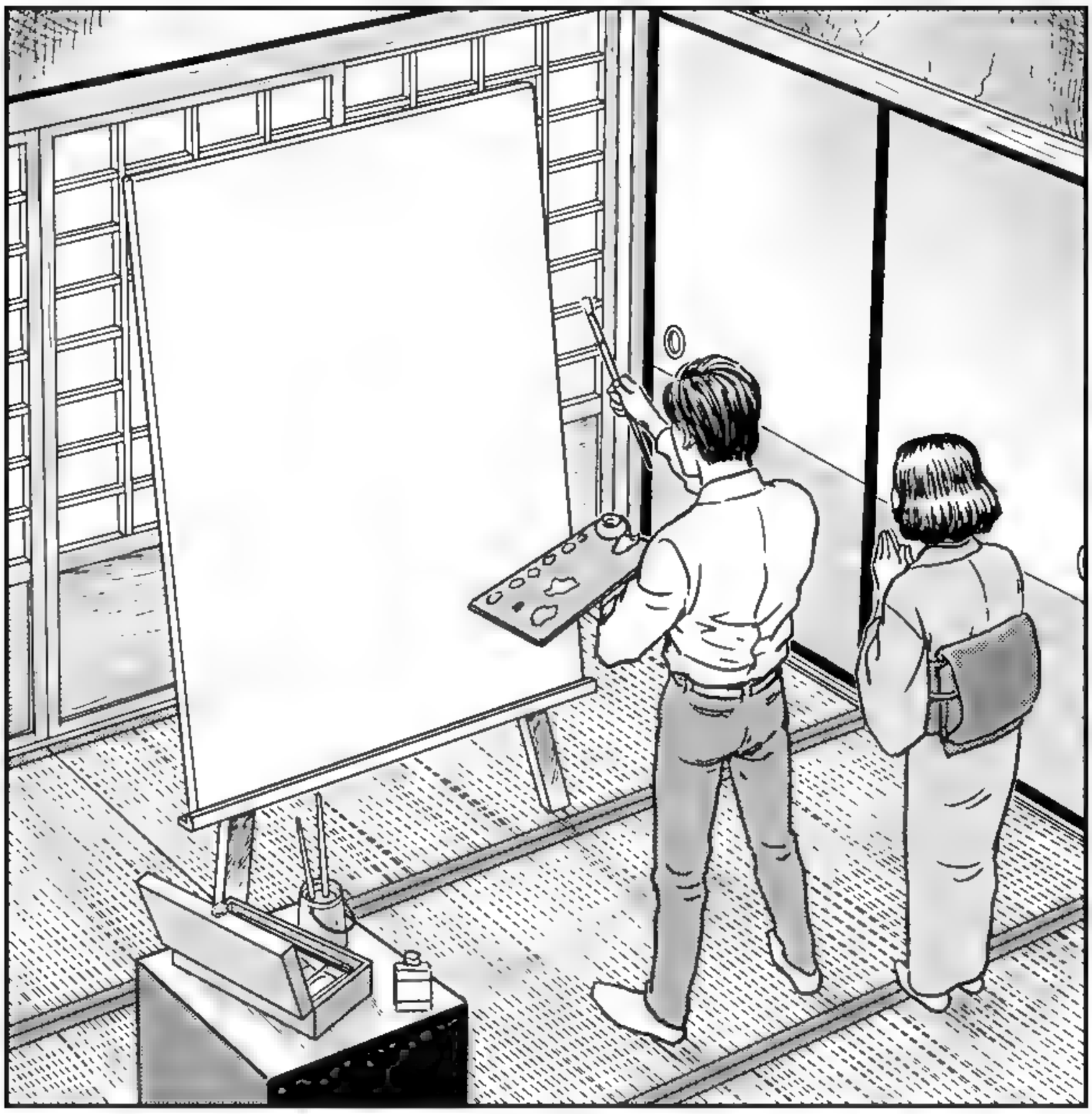
MA'AM, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

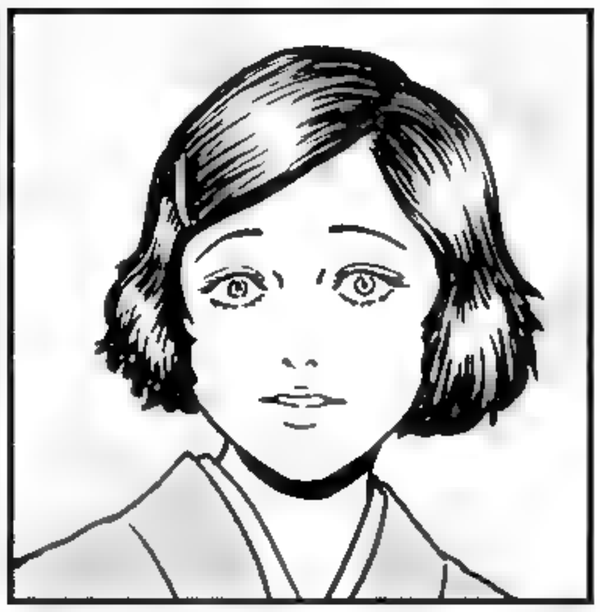
YES...

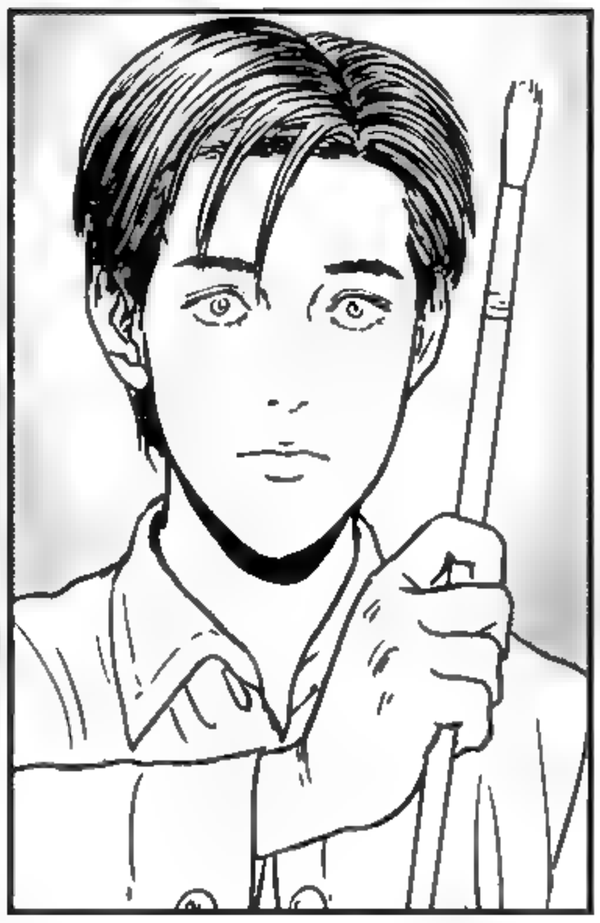
AH!

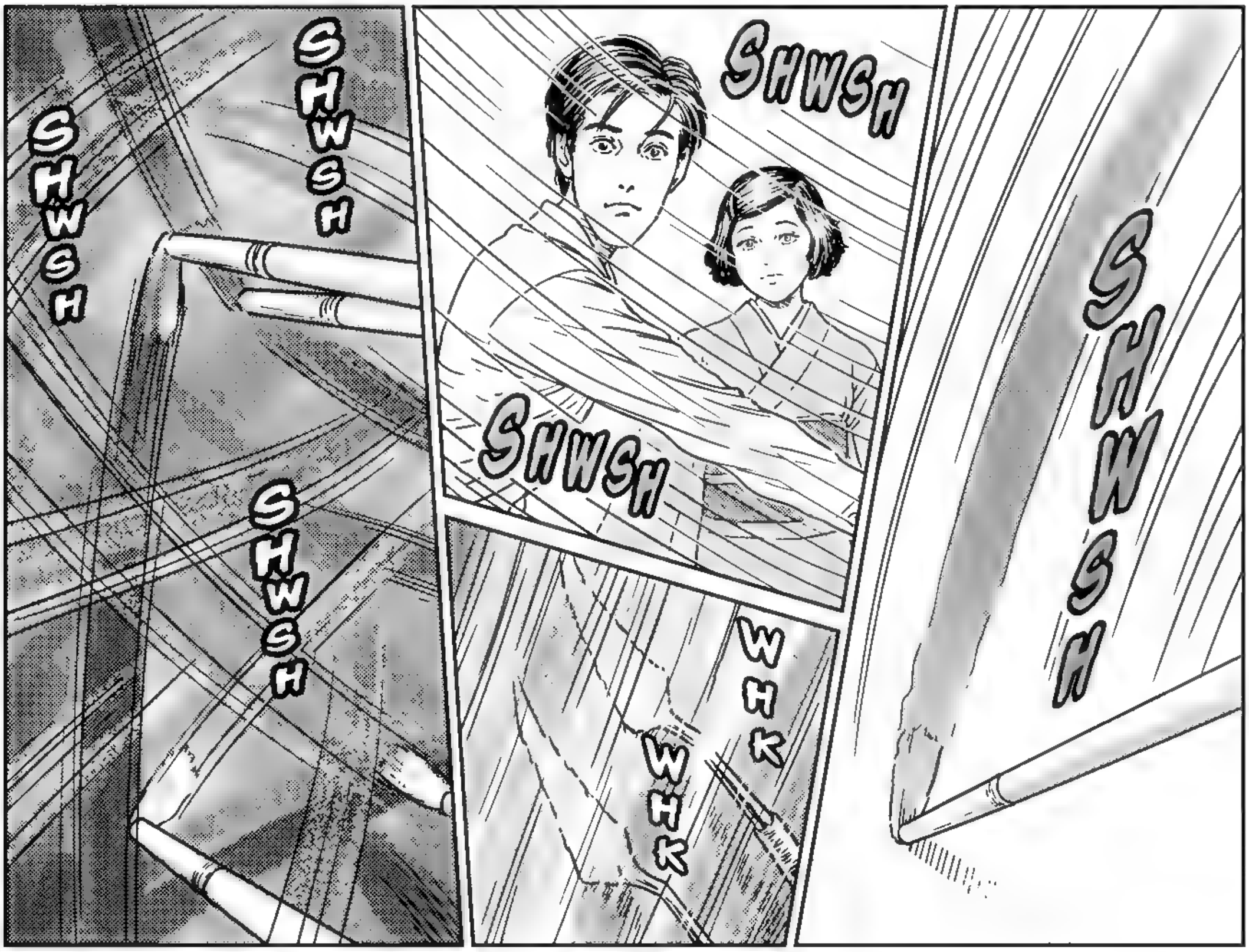
I GOT DIZZY.

I'M SORRY. I'M JUST SO HAPPY...








SHWSH
SHWSH
SHWSH
SHWSH
SHWSH
WHK
WHK
SHWSH

AND THIS?

YES.

MY, SO THIS...IS YOU AND ME?

QUITE PRESUMP-TUOUS.

OUR CHIL-DREN?

YOU MUST KNOW?

YOU AT HOME?!

HEY, LADY-KILLER!

WHAT'S THIS? DO I DETECT A NOTE OF CAUTION IN YOUR FACE?

HOW'S THE GREAT LOVER?

SHE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU TO VISIT HER ONCE IN A WHILE. SWEET, *HM*?

I'VE COME TODAY AS A MESSENGER FROM HER.

I HEARD YOU GOT YOURSELF HITCHED. AND YOU HAD YOUR POSITION WITH THAT LADY IN KOENJI, TOO, DIDN'T YOU?

HORIKI... IT'S BEEN A WHILE...

I'M COMING IN.

YOU'RE AS COCKSURE AS EVER.

YOU CAN SAY ANYTHING IN FRONT OF HER.

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

WHOOPS. MAYBE I SHOULD'VE KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT?

WHAT'S THIS THEN?

OH?

IT'S JUST A HOBBY I DO IN MY SPARE TIME.

BUT, WELL, MANGA FOR ME, YOU SEE...

IN THE *DAILY MORNING*, YOU KNOW?

OH, RIGHT! SO MY MANGA'S GOING TO BE SERIALIZED.

HMM.

NIKA?!

BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS GHOST PAINTING WILL GO OVER.

YOU CAN SHOW IT AT NIKA IF YOU WANT.

FOR THE NIKA SHOW.

OH, IT'S WHAT I'M PAINTING NOW.

That was how we happened to warm over the embers of our old friendship.

We went to the bar in Kyobashi...

...and eventually, dead drunk, we visited Shizuko's apartment in Koenji, where I somehow even spent the night.

HOW ABOUT A DRINK?

SUITS ME.

...while I was left with nothing more than the provisional promise of crossing the finish line at Nika.

But what was different from before was that Horiki had a manga with a first-rate paper...

When the two of us met face-to-face, it was as if we immediately transformed into dogs of the same breed and bounded through the nighttime streets.

Horiki and myself. I felt we were exactly alike.

WHY ARE YOU WEARING A LOUNGING KIMONO ?

WHAT'S THE MATTER, HORIKI?

LET ME SPEND THE NIGHT!

OBA!

I shall never forget.

It was a hot, sticky night near the end of summer.

I HATE TO TELL YOU, BUT WE HAVE NO MONEY EITHER.

ALSO, SORRY FOR THE BOTHER, BUT CAN YOU LEND ME A BIT?

AAH, THIS DARNED WRITER'S BLOCK.

IT LOOKED LIKE AOKI AT THE NEWSPAPER WAS GOING TO LOCK ME UP AND PUT ME TO WORK, SO I RAN AWAY.

MM. WE'LL BE BACK SOON. BOIL UP SOME BROAD BEANS FOR US.

YOZO, HERE...

SORRY, YOSHI!

YOSHIKO, THE PAWNSHOP... YOU'VE GOT KIMONO, HAVEN'T YOU?

YES.

...we decided to enjoy the cool of the evening for a moment.

Once we had reached a park near our apartment...

I lent Horiki what he needed from the money from the pawnshop and bought some gin with what was left over.

CAN YOU EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE FEELINGS OF A POPULAR MANGA ARTIST?

BUT HORIKI, ARE YOU SURE IT'S ALL RIGHT TO RUN OFF FROM MR. AOKI?

It was a dismal little party.

Faint miasmic gusts of wind blew up from the Sumida River every now and then.

WHAT'S THAT EXACTLY?

ALL RIGHT THEN, FORGET IT. HOW ABOUT WE PLAY THAT GAME?

Persons who failed to see the distinction were obviously unqualified to discuss art.

I had invented the game myself.

ARE YOU READY?

WHAT'S TOBACCO?

THE GUESSING GAME OF TRAGIC AND COMIC NOUNS.

OHH, THAT.

TRAGI-COMIC.

TRAGI-COMIC?

TRAGIC.

INJEC-TION.

POWDER OR PILLS?

MEDI-CINE?

TRAGIC.

COMIC.

AND THAT GOES FOR MINISTERS AND PRIESTS, TOO.

BUT, YOU KNOW, MEDICINES AND DOCTORS ARE, SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, COMIC.

YOU WIN.

WHAT ABOUT DEATH?

NO, DEFINITELY TRAGIC. THERE'S THE NEEDLE—WHAT COULD BE MORE TRAGIC THAN A NEEDLE?

I WONDER. THERE ARE HORMONE INJECTIONS TOO.

IN THAT CASE EVERYTHING BECOMES COMIC.

WRONG. IT'S COMIC, TOO.

THEN LIFE MUST BE TRAGIC?

BRAVO!

FIRST-RATE MANGA ARTISTS ARE COMIC, THE THIRD-RATE ONES ARE TRAGIC. THAT'S OBVIOUS.

NOW THAT! YOU'VE GOT ALL SORTS OF MANGA ARTISTS.

HERE'S ONE MORE FOR YOU. WHAT ABOUT A MANGA ARTIST? CAN'T BE COMIC, CAN IT?

COMIC.

DON QUIXOTE IS...

WHAT ABOUT A DON QUIXOTE TAKING ON THE NIKA SHOW?

ALL RIGHT, MY TURN THEN.

LOOKING AT YOU, I HAVE A HARD TIME BELIEVING IT'S COMIC.

TRAGIC...

TRAGIC...

WRONG ...

IT'S TRAGIC.

TRAGIC ...

TRAGIC ...

HOW ABOUT WE GUESS ANTONYMS?

OH... ALL RIGHT, NEXT.

WHAT'S WRONG, OBA? DONE ALREADY?

COMPLI-
CATED.

THE ANTONYM OF RED IS BLACK.

SO WHAT'S THE ANTONYM OF A FLOWER?

THE ANTONYM OF BLACK IS WHITE. BUT THE ANTONYM OF WHITE IS RED.

I'VE GOT IT. IT'S A BEE.

MORE OF A SYN-ONYM.

THAT'S NOT AN ANTONYM.

SO MOON.

LET ME SEE. THERE WAS THAT RESTAURANT FLOWER MOON.

PRETTY POOR. SOUNDS LIKE A LINE OUT OF A POPULAR SONG. YOU BETRAY YOUR ORIGINS.

THAT'S RIGHT. WIND ON THE BLOSSOMS. IT'S THE WIND. THE ANTONYM OF FLOWER.

YOU'RE THINKING OF CLOUDS COVERING THE MOON.

I KNOW! CLOUDS THAT COVER FLOWERS!

A BEE?

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? NO BLUFFING NOW.

AREN'T THERE BEES—OR IS IT ANTS—IN PEONIES?

THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT. WAIT! HOW ABOUT A WOMAN?

THE ANTONYM OF FLOWER IS THE THING IN THE WORLD LEAST LIKE A FLOWER.

EN-TRAILS.

THEN WHAT'S THE SYNONYM FOR WOMAN?

YOU'RE NOT VERY POETIC, ARE YOU? SO THEN WHAT'S THE ANTONYM FOR ENTRAILS?

MILK.

...

WHAT ABOUT MASAO HORIKI?

THEN ...

SHAME-LESS.

A THIRD-RATE MANGA ARTIST AND NIKA DON QUIXOTE, YOZO OBA.

THAT'S PRETTY GOOD. ONE MORE IN THAT VEIN.

WHAT'S THE ANTONYM OF SHAME?

SHAME.

!

I'VE NEVER BEEN TIED UP LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL THE WAY YOU HAVE.

DON'T BE CHEEKY NOW.

SPLASH

DARLIIIIING!!

D—

TSU-
NEKO!!

NOTHING.

OH.

WHAT'S WRONG, OBA?

...CRIME BELONGS IN A DIFFERENT CATEGORY.

GUFG

GUFG

THE LAW.

THIS IS A HARD ONE.

...WHAT'S THE ANTONYM OF CRIME?

THEY ARE, I THINK. VIRTUE AND VICE ARE CONCEPTS, WORDS FOR A MORALITY INVENTED BY HUMAN BEINGS.

ARE VICE AND CRIME DIFFER-ENT?

YOU JUST DON'T QUIT. SO THEN IT *IS* GOD.

GOD. GOD. EVERYTHING'S GOD! I'M HUNGRY.

WELL THEN WHAT? GOD?

YOU CAN'T DISPOSE OF THE PROBLEM SO LIGHTLY. I FEEL YOU CAN TELL EVERYTHING ABOUT A PERSON JUST FROM THEIR ANSWER TO THIS ONE QUESTION.

YOSHIKO'S COOKING SOME BEANS AT THE APARTMENT.

GREAT. I LOVE BEANS.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS. THE ANTONYM IS VIRTUE. A VIRTUOUS CITIZEN LIKE MYSELF.

NO JOKING AROUND. VIRTUE IS THE ANTONYM OF VICE, NOT CRIME.

I MIGHT INDULGE A LITTLE, BUT I DON'T CAUSE WOMEN TO DIE, AND I DON'T LIFT MONEY FROM THEM EITHER.

THAT'S RIGHT. I'M NOT A CRIMINAL LIKE YOU.

...VERY INTER-ESTED IN CRIME.

YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE...

WHY DON'T YOU GO GET IT YOURSELF?!

IF WE KNEW THE ANTONYM OF CRIME, I THINK WE WOULD KNOW ITS TRUE NATURE...

AAH, I'M HUNGRY. BRING ME SOMETHING TO EAT.

CRIME BACKWARDS IS—NO, THAT DOESN'T WORK. BUT IT DOES CONTAIN R-I-C-E.

!

DOSTO-EVSKY...

CRIME AND PUNISH-MENT ...

THE ANTONYM OF CRIME IS RICE— NO, BEANS ...

ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO BACK TO THE APARTMENT AND COMMIT A CRIME WITH YOSHIKO.

ABSO-LUTELY INCOM-PATIBLE IDEAS.

CRIME AND PUNISH-MENT.

...NOT AS SYNONYMS BUT AS ANTONYMS?

WHAT IF HE PUT CRIME AND PUNISHMENT SIDE BY SIDE...

WITH CRIME AND PUNISHMENT AS ANTONYMS, WHAT LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SCUM-COVERED POND, THE CHAOS OF DOSTOEVSKY'S MIND...

...AAH, I'VE ALMOST GOT IT... NO, I STILL...

DO AS YOU PLEASE. JUST GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!!

COME HAVE A LOOK.

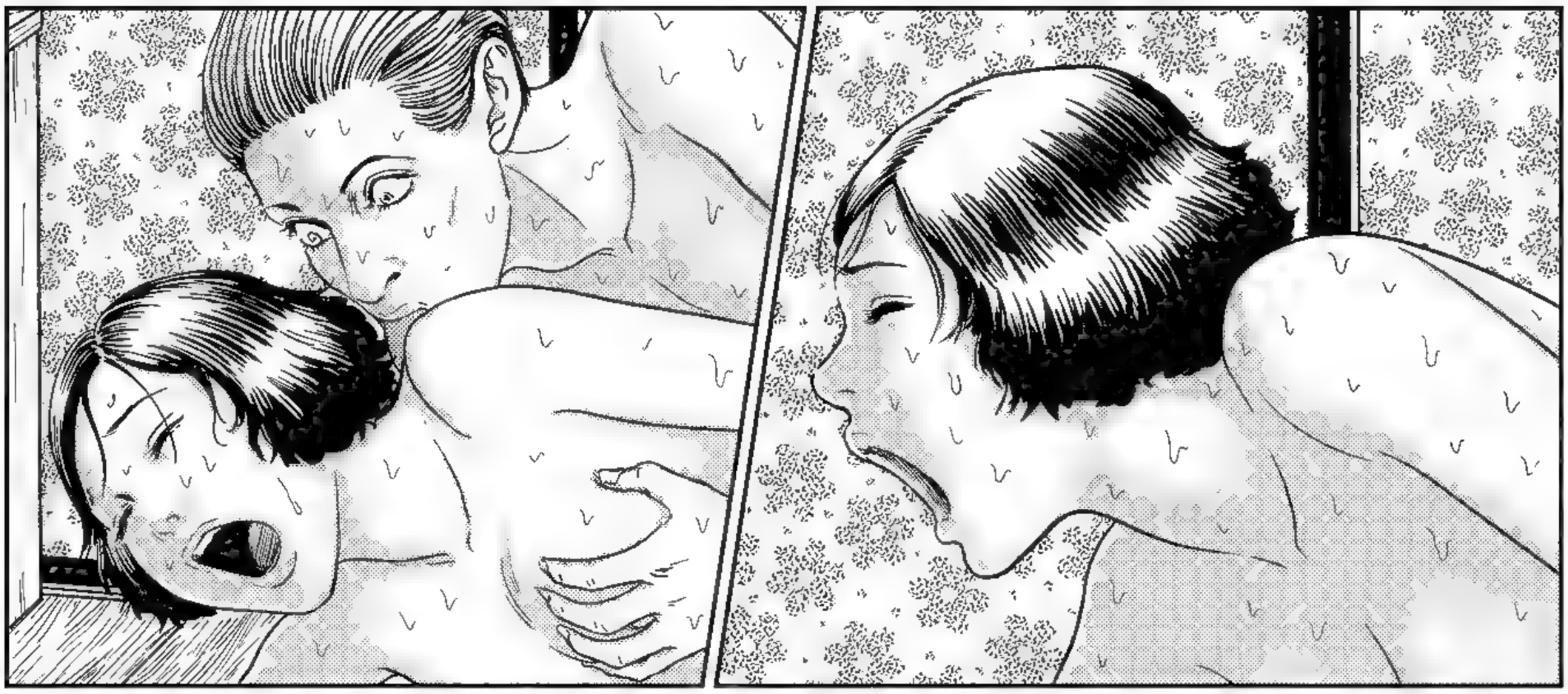
WHAT?

THE BEANS ARE EXTRAORDI- NARY.

HEY!

...were two animals...

Inside the room...



CHAIN No. 14: Aspects of Human Behavior

Nothing to be surprised at.

This is just another aspect of human behavior.

AHEM !!

!

OBA.

SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE

ZSH ZSH

WELL, THAT'S UNLIKELY. THIS IS BASICALLY HELL. SO LONG.

WHAT YOU DO ABOUT AOKI'S UP TO YOU. I WISH YOU HAD THE BACKBONE TO STAB EACH OTHER, TWO PIECES OF GARBAGE, BUT...

YOU SHOULD FORGIVE YOSHIKO. YOU'RE NOT MUCH OF A PRIZE YOURSELF.

HAAH

HAAH

FWAP FWAP FWAP

I'd never felt such pleasure before.

That the sight of my wife with another man would arouse such abnormal excitement ...

But the feeling that came over me after that was bleak despair.

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

YOZO.

UNNNH.

AAAAAH.

...HE WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING...

...HE TOLD ME...

!

SIT DOWN. LET'S EAT THOSE BEANS.

YOU DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH TO DISTRUST OTHERS.

DON'T SAY ANY-THING.

IT'S FINE.

I neither forgave nor refused to forgive her. Yoshiko was a genius at trusting people.

She simply didn't know how to suspect anyone. But the misery it caused...

Is an innocent, trusting heart a crime?

FWSH

God. I ask you.

KSH

SHK

...that I could hardly carry on.

...that became so persistent a source of grief...

...than the defilement of her trust in people...

It was less Yoshiko's defilement...

SHK

...like a waterfall among green leaves.

...Yoshiko's immaculate trustfulness seemed clean and pure...

...that I was wretchedly timid, forever trying to read the expression on people's faces...

...in whom the ability to trust was so cracked and broken...

For someone like me...

...

...turned that pure cascade yellow and muddy.

One night...

HAAH.

HAAH.

THIS HERE IS A TRUE WORK OF ART.

LOOK. IT'S FINISHED.

HEY.

GASP

I WONDER IF AOKI WILL UNDER-STAND IT?

CREATION AND DESTRUC-TION, A NOVEL THEME!

HEH HEH HEH.

I CAN'T WAIT FOR NIKA.

OKAY.

O-

NOW! A TOAST, YOSHIKO!

GIN! BRING THE GIN!

I drank from morning to night.

My teeth fell out.

Because of her rare virtue, her immaculate trustfulness, Yoshiko had been violated.

Now that I harbored doubts about even this one virtue I depended on, my only resort was drink.

I wanted money to buy gin.

I began to copy pornographic pictures that I secretly peddled.

No, I'll come out with it plainly.

The manga I drew now verged on the pornographic.

KOFF!

KOFF KOFF!

KOFF!

...

Perhaps other men...

Horiki?

It was unlikely, wasn't it, that a woman with absolutely no defenses had only yielded that once with Aoki.

What was this resolve to stab another?

Right now, he was carefree, drawing his silly manga for a "first-rate paper."

Horiki... I would never forgive him for not clearing his throat when he first discovered them instead of going out of his way to come and tell me.

He was the one I would never forgive.

He...

MR. JOSHI!

ARE YOU IN?

MR. JOSHI!

IT'S ME.

AOKI.

TH-

THAT VOICE...

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN IN TOUCH SOONER.

KOFF!

KOFF!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

GOODNESS, THAT'S A NASTY COUGH.

I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF HIM.

YES, ABOUT MR. HORIKI.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IS EVERY-THING GOING WELL WITH HORIKI?

OH, IT'S JUST A COLD.

...SO WHAT DID YOU NEED?

AND TO TOP IT OFF, HE'S STOLEN WORK BY A CERTAIN MAJOR MANGA ARTIST.

I'VE TRIED ALL SORTS OF THINGS, BUT HE KEEPS FAKING ILLNESS OR DISAPPEARING.

WELL, THE TRUTH IS, HE HASN'T BEEN DRAWING ANYTHING FOR SOME TIME NOW.

THUS THERE'S A HOLE IN THE PAPER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

BUT I'D LIKE TO OFFER YOU A SERIES ONCE AGAIN!

WHICH IS TO SAY... WE LET HIM GO. AND SO...

SO NATURALLY, OUR PATIENCE HAS ALSO WORN THIN.

I KNOW IT'S SELFISH TO COME TO YOU NOW, AND I DO APOLOGIZE.

...

YOU'RE A FIRST-RATE ARTIST, AREN'T YOU, MR. JOSHI?!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

I COULD NEVER BE IN SUCH A FIRST-RATE PAPER.

NO... I'M MORE SUITED TO A THIRD-RATE RAG.

PLEASE DO LET ME HAVE A LOOK.

OH!

IT'S IN THE BACK ROOM.

YES. I'VE FINISHED IT.

MAKING PROG-RESS?

WHICH REMINDS ME. HOW IS YOUR WORK FOR NIKA GOING?

THIS...

TH—

Stab him!

Stab him!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE.

OH! IF IT ISN'T THE WIFE!

SSH

PLEASE HAVE SOME TEA...

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

MA'AM!

M-MA'AM!

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

HAAH

YOSHI.

LET'S COMMIT A CRIME.

THE ANTONYM OF CRIME IS BROAD BEANS...MY FAVORITE.

YOSHI.

HORIKI.

H—

!

HORIKI!

TAKITO ?!

!

TAKE-ICHI...

?!

...as I timidly attempted a venture at indirect questioning.

...I was inflicting on Yoshiko an abominable, hellish caressing...

How much was truth?

How much was illusion?

Before I knew it...

THREE TIMES WITH HORIKI... THAT'S WHAT HORIKI SAID.

HOW WAS MY FATHER? ...NO. *HA HA HA!* THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE...

I KNOW. I SAW YOU.

SO YOU WERE WITH AOKI FIVE TIMES, RIGHT?

...I dropped into a dead sleep.

I DON'T KNOW!

I DIDN'T DO IT!

In my heart I bounded foolishly from joy to sorrow.

But on the surface, my immoderate clowning. And then...

HUH HUH!

KLAKKA

HUP!

I'M HOOOME!

Toward the end of that year...

POK

KOFF! KOFF!

SUGAR-WATER, SUGAR-WATER...

DIAL...

DIAL

...

The poor girl likely hid it here for when she felt like I would need it.

The contents of this box of sleeping pills was more than enough to cause death.

The writing had been scratched off, but the part in Western letters remained intact.

Yoshiko couldn't read Western letters, so she must have thought this would be enough.

HUP.
THUD

In my fading consciousness, phantoms (o torture me appeared once again before my eyes...

...and continued until I fell into a deep sleep.

CHAIN No. 15: The Deepest Hell

Before I knew it, I was floating in space...

...and slowly descending through a deep, dark tunnel.

Hell...

I realized that I was dying...

...and that I was going to go to hell.

Infinite hells in which only suffering was eternal.

My body felt heavy.

It was no doubt because of this weight that my body was descending.

The bottom of the abyss, the one place I wished not to go.

The ten misfortunes that had always been packed away inside of me.

I understood the cause of the heaviness.

I had to hurry...

HNGH

If only I could vomit up these misfortunes, my body would become lighter...

...and I would be able to ascend to paradise.

HRRRK

I believed this, but when a crowd of individuals formed, the pressure increased tenfold, a hundredfold.

At most, society was the individual... It was not worth fearing.

The first... was the misfortune of society.

S—

STAY AWAY...

STAY AWAY FROM MEEEEE!!

HAAH.

HAAH.

HNGH!

HAAH.

HAAH.

HRRK!

Now there were nine left. I had to get them all out...

I was still descending steadily.

YOU'RE SO SMART.

A GENIUS!

YOCHAN, YOU'RE IN-CREDIBLE!

MAYBE YOU'LL BE A PROFESSOR OR A CABINET MINISTER.

YOU GOT THE TOP GRADE IN THE MOCK EXAM WITHOUT EVEN STUDYING.

This... What misfortune was this?

YOU'RE SO CHEERFUL AND POPULAR.

PLUS, YOU MAKE US LAUGH WITH YOUR MISCHIEF.

TOTALLY PERFECT!

GLOOMY...

DEPRESSED...

OUTCAST...

MURDERER...

ON PURPOSE ...

ON PURPOSE ...

YOUR TRUE SELF...

YOU'RE A MONSTER.

This was the misfortune of being respected.

...a certain all-knowing someone saw through me and smashed me to pieces. He shamed me in a way worse than death.

The misfortune of being respected... Nearly perfect. I fooled people, and then...

HRK!

EEE-AAAH!!

The third misfortune was friendship.

We spent time together, each holding the other in contempt, debasing each other.

ONLY NATURAL REALLY, BUT STILL, CONGRATULATIONS.

HEY LADY-KILLER, HEARD YOU'RE GOING TO HELL.

I'M A MISFORTUNE? PEOPLE IN GLASS HOUSES SHOULDN'T THROW STONES, YOU KNOW.

YOU YOURSELF BROUGHT COUNTLESS MISFORTUNES TO THOSE AROUND YOU!

This was the shape of friendship for me, symbolized by Horiki.

A FELLOW LIKE YOU DESERVES TO GET HIS TONGUE PULLED OUT BY DEMONS IN HELL...

...HAVE HIS SKIN PEELED OFF, AND BE BOILED LIKE A BROAD BEAN.

ISN'T TRYING TO GO TO PARADISE ASKING A BIT MUCH AFTER ALL THIS?

YOU'RE PRETTY FOND OF THIS STUFF, TOO, AREN'T YOU? TOO BAD. GUESS I'LL HAVE TO HAVE A PARTY BY MYSELF.

OH? THAT'S TOO BAD. AND HERE I WAS THINKING WE COULD HAVE A DRINK TO CELEBRATE.

GO AWAY!

SHUT UP! I DON'T NEED YOU TELLING ME THAT.

I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN.

SPREADS RIGHT THROUGH YOU.

PWAAH!

...

AAAH, THAT REALLY HITS THE SPOT!!

FWOO.

...

GLUG

GLUG

WHK

...

HNRRRGH!

KOFF!

KOFF!
KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!
KOFF!

BWWON

The fourth misfortune was woman. Human women.

More than difficult, these incomprehensible, insidious beings.

The ones who always drew near and looked after me for some reason.

I WOULD GO TO HELL WITH YOU. I WOULDN'T EVEN MIND BURNING IN THOSE FLAMES.

YOU MUSTN'T, TSUNEKO. YOU CAN'T SACRIFICE YOURSELF FOR MY SAKE.

IF YOU DON'T, I'LL GO TO HELL.

I STILL HAVE SO MANY OTHER MISFORTUNES I MUST VOMIT UP.

SAY, LADIES, WOULD YOU LEAVE ME ALONE NOW?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D SAY THAT. I *DID* SACRIFICE MYSELF THAT NIGHT.

Y-YOU'RE WRONG, TSUNEKO. I MEAN, SACRIFICED...

THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU FOLLOW ME?

W-WELL, THAT...

HO HO HO! THERE'S HIS TRUE NATURE!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW I'VE WEPT SINCE THEN?

I TRULY INTENDED TO DIE WITH YOU.

Y-YOU MISUNDER-STAND ME, NAEKO.

A DEMON WHO MAKES EVERY WOMAN HE MEETS ENTIRELY UNHAPPY.

ALWAYS MAKING EXCUSES, NEVER TAKING RESPONSI-BILITY.

THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN HE IS. A COWARD.

WAAAAH

SAY, WHEN ARE YOU EVER GOING TO HOLD OUR BABY?

IF IT'S NOT YOURS, THEN WHOSE IS IT?!

SETCHAN, IS THAT REALLY MY CHILD? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ME.

WAAAAH

DADDY, DADDY, WHEN ARE YOU COMING HOME?

AAAH, I HAD A CHILD, TOO... SETCHAN KILLED IT.

HONEY, PLEASE STOP BY KOENJI SOMETIMES.

GIVE IT BAAAACK! GIVE MY BABY BAAAACK!

QUIT WHINING, SISTER.

I'LL KISS YOU ALL.

AAH... I CAN'T CONTINUE LIKE THIS.

DO IT. KISS ME.

I'M FIRST.

Women have no sense of moderation.

They always ask for more of me.

Their demands are insatiable.

They sap me of all my energy...

URNGH !!

HRK!

Naeko put her slippery, long, thick tongue into my mouth.

HNGH!

HNGAAAAH

The fifth misfortune swelled up to enormous proportions.

And a familiar scene appeared before my eyes.

I was sucked into my hometown.

...was at the end of this street.

My house...

A mere human being could do nothing but prostrate themselves before it.

My family home rose up ahead, majestic.

And I alone was pulled inside the building.

Fearing this dignified presence, the women went off somewhere.

CHAIN No. 16: Spellbound

The air inside my family home was chilly and cool as always.

And the sense that spirits writhed nearby was unchanged.

There was no one there...

GLUG

GLUG

HRGH!

I COULD LIVE LIKE THIS FOREVER.

NOW *THIS* IS NICE!

GEH!

SPEW

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

H- HELLO...

The sixth misfortune was my siblings and the servants.

BUT MY OWN POSITION IS PRECARIOUS NOW THANKS TO YOUR DEBAUCHERY AND ENDLESS FAILURE.

I FOLLOWED IN FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS AND BECAME A POLITICIAN.

B- BRO- THER...

ALL BECAUSE OF YOU.

YOZO, THE OBA FAMILY IS FINISHED. WE'RE RUINED.

DINNER IS ALL READY.

NOW, THIS WAY, MASTER YOZO.

LET'S LEAVE ASIDE THE LECTURE AND HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT.

COME NOW. YOZO HASN'T BEEN HOME IN AGES.

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR. YOUNG YOZO IS PLENTY SORRY FOR HIS ACTIONS.

LET'S EAT.

SUCH BLESSINGS, SUCH BOUNTY, THIS FOOD BEFORE US.

ALL RIGHT, SHALL WE EAT?

I'LL BE WAITING IN MY ROOM, MASTER YOZO.

AND AFTERWARD, WE'LL DO SOMETHING FUN IN THE GARDEN.

IS IT GOOD?

SO, YOZO?

Cold rice, tasteless side dishes...

Mealtime... That frigid ceremony...

...

...

IT'S JUST SCRUMP-TIOUS!!

IT SURE IS!

URRP!

The seventh misfortune was clowning. The forced smile of my young self...

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

This itself was the accommodation I offered at the cost of excruciating efforts within.

...and resumed my drinking in the garden.

...I slipped out of the room alone...

Unable to endure this scene...

HUP!

MOTHER ...

Mother... Perhaps if I'd truly known you, I wouldn't have turned into a human being like this.

My connection with her was weak. I had almost no memories of her.

The misfortune of "mother" disappeared...

...and a mysterious old mark hidden beneath it became vivid.

YOU REMEMBER ME.

YOZO.

TOKI ...

IT'S YOU, ISN'T IT?!

A faint memory from my youth.

A precious memory...

IF YOU LIE, YOU'LL GO TO HELL AND DEMONS WILL PULL OUT YOUR TONGUE.

SO YOU MUST NEVER, EVER LIE.

YOZO, THIS IS HELL.

She often used to take me to our family temple.

Toki was the wet nurse who raised me instead of my mother.

Toki was kind. And...

...she was always filled with sadness.

AS LONG AS YOU DON'T LIE OR DO BAD THINGS, YOU CAN GO TO PARADISE. SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY.

DON'T BE SILLY. NOTHING TO CRY ABOUT.

NOOOOO! I'M SCAAARED!

I cried and ran around the house calling her name.

When I was five, Toki left the Oba home abruptly.

TOKI!

TOKI!

But I could not understand the sort of sadness it was.

The nights when I buried my face in her chest and slept, my young heart felt her sadness.

TOKI...

I COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU CRY, YOZO. I'M SORRY...

TOKI.

WHY DID YOU LEAVE WITHOUT TELLING ME?

...

I'M SORRY ...

I was still descending. That made eight.

I still had two misfortunes left in me.

I suppose I'd locked the memory of Toki away ever since the day she left.

And then the fact that I'd been able to remember her now on the verge of death...

...was this the least mercy God could grant me?

And I knew what they were.

And I knew the one before that as well, the ninth one.

The tenth one was obviously that I'd been born.

I had to vomit it out immediately.

Because the source of all my pain was this fact alone...

Those last two were very heavy.

The speed of my descent did not lessen.

HRK!

I tried over and over.

But no matter how I tried, I could not bring it up.

HNGH!

Quickly... I had to hurry and throw up.

It was no use. It wouldn't come out.

I noticed a hazy red light in the darkness far below.

Aah. hell...

It was getting ever closer!!

There was no doubt that this was the flames of hell.

O-
of course!!

Now that it had come to that, the misfortune...

SHK

WHNK

PSH

AAAAAH

THE SHAME OF THE OBA FAMILY!!

YOZO!!

AH!

F- FATHER...

AT SUCH A CRITICAL MOMENT IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY, OF COURSE YOU WOULD END YOUR LIFE BY YOUR OWN HAND.

YOU MUST GO TO HELL FOR THIS!

FORGIVE ME... PLEASE FORGIVE ME!!

FATHER!

NO, YOU SHALL GO TO HELL.

LOOK! YOU CAN SEE IT NOW.

WHA
-?!

GRAB

AAAAH!!

AAH!!

TOKI
!!

HELP
ME!!

YOZO
!!

TOKI
!!

FORGIVE
ME!!

YOZO,
I CAN'T...

AH!

AAAAH!!

AH!

WHERE AM I...?

THANK GOODNESS!

YOU'RE AWAKE!

I'M NOT TOKI, HON.

WHAT? TOKI?

TOKI!

TOKI!

HMPH.

MADAM ...

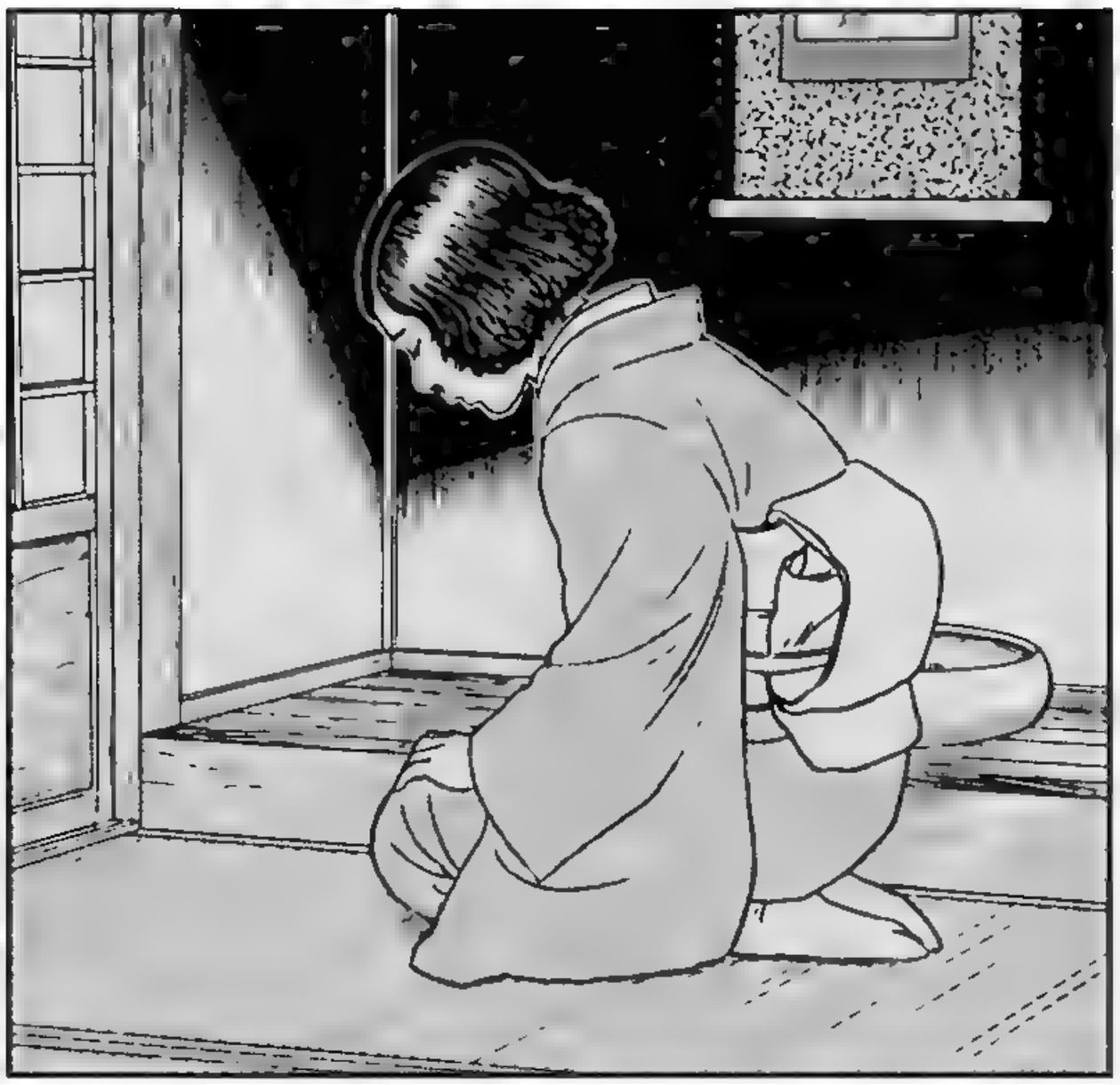
AH!

I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL ALREADY JUST TAKING CARE OF THINGS FOR YOUR FATHER WHEN HE'S ON THE VERGE OF DEATH!!

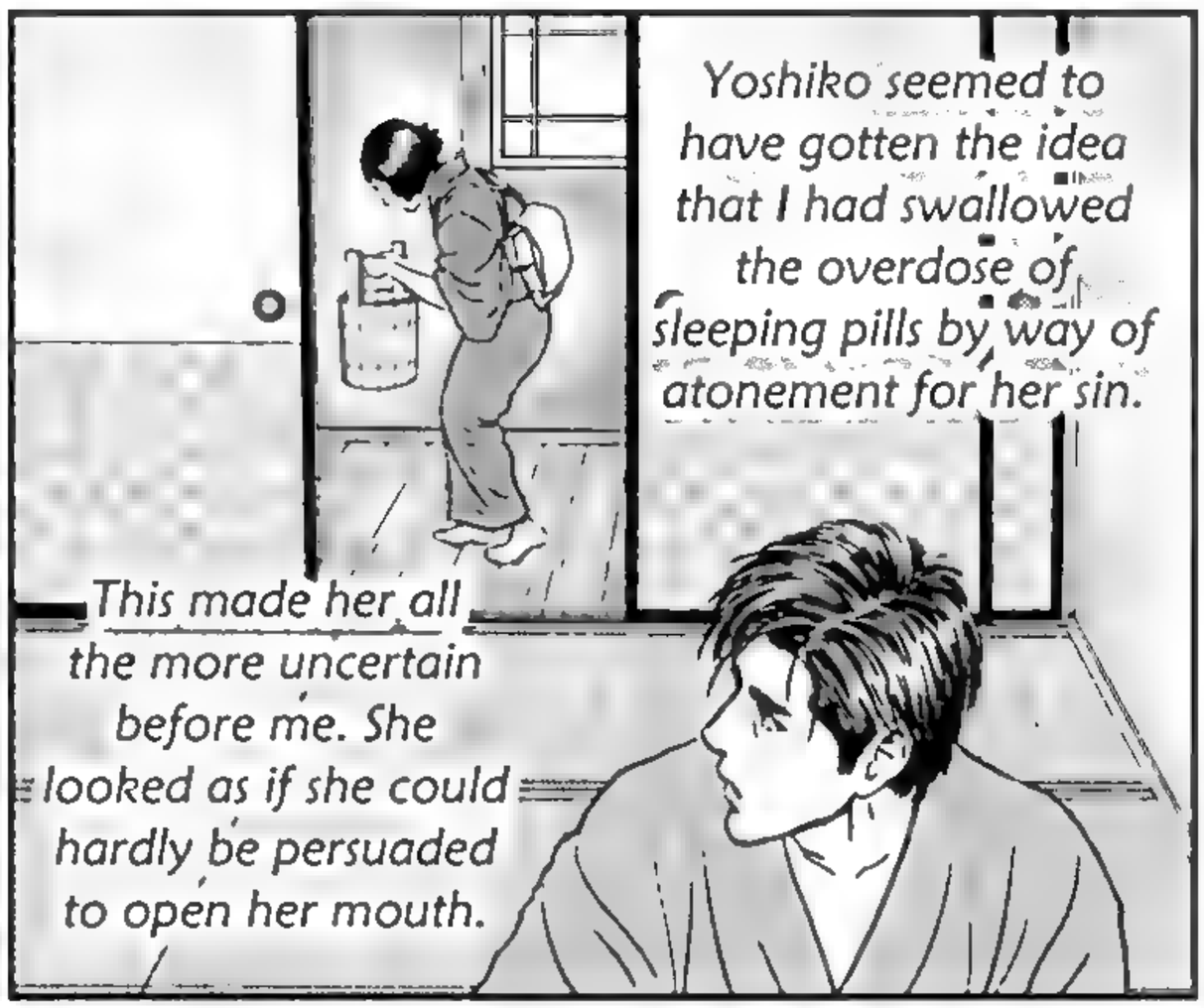
YES... THANK YOU...

WHENEVER YOU KICK UP A FUSS WITH KILLING YOURSELF, IT'S SHIBUTA HERE WHO HAS TO COME AND WIPE YOUR BEHIND.

AGAIN, YOU DO IT AT THE END OF THE YEAR WHEN EVERYBODY IS FRANTICALLY BUSY.



I found the apartment so oppressive...
...that I would go out as usual to swill cheap liquor.


Yoshiko seemed to have gotten the idea that I had swallowed the overdose of sleeping pills by way of atonement for her sin.
This made her all the more uncertain before me. She looked as if she could hardly be persuaded to open her mouth.

KOFF.
KAFF.

I often was too lazy to draw manga...
After the Dial incident, I lost weight noticeably. My arms and legs felt heavy.

BLOOD?

...

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

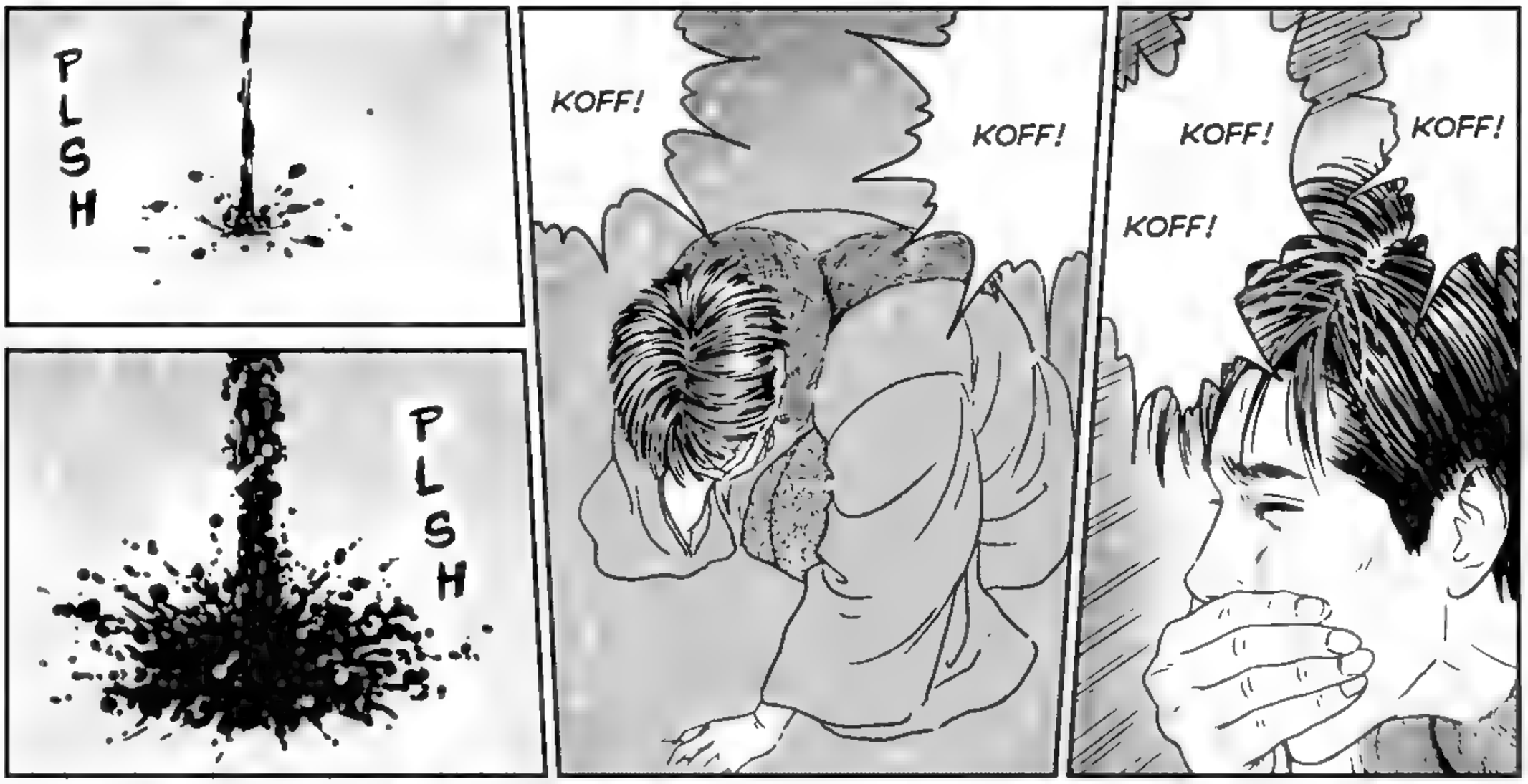
And my physical condition only grew worse.

To beat back my unease, I drank gin until I fairly swam in it.

On a night in Tokyo when the snow was falling heavily...

...I'VE NO MORE MONEY...

A DRINK... I WANT A DRINK.



It formed a big rising-sun flag in the snow.

That was the first time I had brought up blood.

CHAIN No. 17: Hiroko

KOFF!

KOFF!

KSH KSH KSH

STAGGER STAGGER

GUARD MACY...

MEDI-CINE ...

KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

?!

KSH

AAAH!!

AH!

KSH

KSH

KSH

EE-YAAAH!!

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

EEAH !!

KSH

KSH

HELP !!

H-

K

TAKE MY HAND.

YOZO.

TOKI...

GET ME OUT OF THIS HELL...

TOKI...

EEAAH!

TOKI...
TOKI!!

HELL?!
IS THIS
HELL?!

SO YOU'RE AWAKE?

YOU WERE CURLED UP IN FRONT OF THE STORE, SO I BROUGHT YOU INSIDE TO LET YOU REST A BIT.

YOU'VE BEEN CALLING FOR "TOKI," BUT YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG PERSON... I'M HIROKO, THE PHARMACIST.

ARE YOU TOKI?

TOKI ...

OH, I'M SORRY.

HELL ...?

THE PHARMA-CIST?

THIS ISN'T HELL?

THEY *ARE* MEDICINAL, BUT SOME ARE POISONOUS AND COULD BE DEADLY IF USED INCORRECTLY.

THESE ARE MEDICINAL HERBS I'M DRYING.

WITH THEM DRYING INSIDE ONE ROOM LIKE THIS, THOUGH, IT DOES LOOK LIKE A SCENE FROM HELL, DOESN'T IT?

THE TRUTH IS, I WAS COUGHING UP BLOOD. DO YOU HAVE ANY MEDICINE FOR THAT?

YES... HIROKO...

OH... I SEE...

YOU LOOK QUITE AWFUL. WHAT EXACTLY IS THE MATTER?

BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY. I HAVEN'T HAD A DROP IN TWO DAYS NOW.

MY HANDS WON'T STOP SHAKING. THEY STOP IF I HAVE A DRINK, THOUGH.

WELL, I HAVE THIS TERRIBLE COUGH.

PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT YOUR CONDITION IN DETAIL.

THAT'S HOW HE SHORT-ENED HIS LIFE.

MY HUSBAND USED TO SOAK HIMSELF IN LIQUOR IN SPITE OF HIS TUBERCULOSIS. HE CLAIMED THE LIQUOR KILLED THE GERMS.

YOU MUSTN'T. YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP DRINKING.

I MAY WELL BE AN ALCOHOLIC ...

I SEE THINGS, AS WELL.

I'M AFRAID. I'M NO GOOD FOR ANYTHING.

I FEEL SO ON EDGE I CAN'T STAND IT.

I WANT A DRINK RIGHT NOW.

I'M COMING.

ALL RIGHT, FATHER.

I HAVE TO PEEEEE.

HEYYY, HIROKOOO.

HEYYY.

OW! OW OW OW OW!!

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

UNH!

ON TOP OF THE DRAWERS THERE...

I'M SORRY. MY LEG'S NO GOOD BECAUSE OF AN ILLNESS WHEN I WAS FIVE. EVEN NOW, IT PAINS ME TERRIBLY FROM TIME TO TIME.

WHAT HAPPENED ?

...FROM THE BOX, THERE AND THE SYRINGE?

COULD YOU PLEASE GET ME AN AMPOULE ...

*Morphine

HURRYYYY! I'M GOING TO PEE MYSELF!

HIROKO-OOOO!

ALL RIGHT, HERE'S THE BEDPAN FOR YOU.

COMING!

YES!

THIS IS A SERUM FOR VITAMIN INJECTIONS. AND THE SYRINGE.

THIS BUILDS YOUR BLOOD.

THIS IS DIASTASE FOR UPSET STOMACH.

THESE ARE CALCIUM PILLS.

ALL RIGHT.

BUT NO MORE LIQUOR, AT ANY RATE.

YOU CAN GET ME THE MONEY ANYTIME.

KRNCH

KRNCH

HO
HO
HO
HO
HO

AAAH!!
AAH...
AAH, IT'S NO USE...

HELP !!

AAAH!!

MA'AM !!

MA'AM !!

KLAK

KLATTER

KLATTER

MA'AM !!

MA'AM !!

...

WHEN DID YOU GET HERE?

OH MY.

HM?

MA'AM, WHAT...

IT MUST BE DISTURB-ING?

I SUPPOSE IT'S STRANGE TO DO FLOWER ARRANGEMENT WITH DRIED HERBS, *HM?*

I DO THIS SOMETIMES WHEN THE SPIRIT MOVES ME.

NO, IT'S ALMOST ...

...

I'M NOT SURE IF YOU CAN CALL IT *IKEBANA* WHEN THE FLOWERS ARE ALL DEAD.

A HORSE OUT OF HELL! HOW WONDER-FUL!

I COULDN'T ASK FOR HIGHER PRAISE.

IT'S LIKE A HORSE OUT OF HELL...

THE DEAD PLANTS... I THINK THE FACT THAT THEY'RE WITHERED AND FADED IS WHAT MAKES THEM TRULY BEAUTIFUL.

I PREFER DEAD POISONOUS HERBS TO THE SHOWY BLOOMS OF LIVING FLOWERS.

A truly creative person, seeing the beauty in the seemingly strange.

Here in front of me was a true artist.

YOU MUSTN'T DRINK.

AAH... AAAAH...

THE DEMONS OF HELL ARE HERE FOR ME.

PLEASE GIVE ME A DRINK.

AAH, MA'AM... BUT... BUT I CAN'T GO ON. I WANT A DRINK.

I'M SEEING THINGS.

RATHER THAN LIQUOR...

WELL, IF IT'S COME TO THAT.

*Morphine hydrochloride

"This is a medicine to be used when you need a drink so badly you can't stand it."

"It's no more harmful than liquor."

I turned into an expansively optimistic and fluent talker.

Soon after I injected it, my insecurity, fretfulness and timidity were swept away.

POK

When it reached four...

I had intended to take one shot a day,-but it became two, then three.

MEDI-CINE...

...I could no longer work unless I had my shots.

I NEED MEDI-CINE...

HA HA HA!

The injections made me forget how weak my body was, and I applied myself energetically to my manga.

Sometimes I would burst out laughing even while I was drawing.

HEE HEE HEE!

藥本野局

BAM

BAM

MA'AM !!

MA'AM !!

MEDICINE... PLEASE GIVE ME MY MEDICINE!!

CHAIN No. 18: Heaven and Hell

I PROMISE I'LL PAY YOU AT THE END OF THE MONTH.

MA'AM... I BEG YOU! ONE MORE BOX.

YOU MUSTN'T. HOW DREADFUL IT WOULD BE IF YOU BECAME AN ADDICT.

BUT THE POLICE ARE VERY TROUBLE-SOME, YOU KNOW.

YOU CAN PAY THE BILL ANY OLD TIME AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.

PLEASE.

COME ON.

I'LL GIVE YOU A KISS.

I BEG YOU! TELL THEM SOMETHING OR OTHER, PUT THEM OFF THE TRACK.

YOU MUSTN'T DRINK.

HOW ABOUT HORMONE INJEC-TIONS?

IT'S A KIND OF ENERGY BUILDER.

I CAN'T DO ANY WORK UNLESS I HAVE THE MEDICINE.

DON'T BE SILLY. IT'S LIQUOR OR THAT MEDICINE, ONE OR THE OTHER.

IF ONLY I CAN GET OVER THIS CRITICAL PERIOD.

NOW THAT I'VE STOPPED DRINKING AND STRAIGHTENED MYSELF OUT, I'M GOING TO STUDY. I'M SURE I CAN BECOME A GREAT PAINTER.

I DON'T INTEND TO GO ON DRAWING STUPID MANGA FOREVER, YOU KNOW.

I'M IN FINE PHYSICAL SHAPE, THANKS TO YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT. I HAVEN'T TOUCHED A DROP SINCE I BEGAN WITH THAT MEDICINE.

HONESTLY ...

HOW ABOUT A KISS?

SO, PLEASE.

WELL, IF THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN DO.

HOW STINGY YOU'VE BECOME!

YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY BECOME AN ADDICT, FOR ALL I KNOW.

I CAN'T GIVE YOU A WHOLE BOX. YOU'D USE IT ALL UP. HERE'S HALF.

...as soon as I got back home.

I gave myself a shot...

DOESN'T IT HURT?

...

Y-YES.

YOU'VE NOTICED HOW HEALTHY I'VE BEEN OF LATE, YOSHIKO.

OF COURSE IT HURTS. BUT IT'S TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF MY WORK.

OH, YOSHIKO? SOME TEA, PLEASE.

TO WORK, TO WORK!!

WELL, TO WORK!!

ARE YOU CRYING?

YOSHI-KO?

...

SO TO SEE YOU SO HEALTHY NOW, IT'S SIMPLY...

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I'M SORRY... IT WAS MY FAULT THAT YOUR HEALTH DECLINED.

I WOULD HAVE DIED TO MAKE IT RIGHT.

FWOOSH

YOU'RE SO BEAUTI-FUL.

YOSHI-KO.

FUSS
FUSS
FUSS
FUSS
WAIT!
OH MY! I'LL JOIN YOU.
I'M GOING OUT FOR A WALK, YOSHIKO.
YAAAAH!
!
FUSS
FUSS
YAAAAH!
FUSS
FUSS
FUSS

CHILDREN ARE SIMPLY ADORABLE, *HM?*

YAAAH

OH, TO HAVE ONE OF OUR OWN...

SO LOVELY.

HUFF.

HAAH.

HUFF.

HAAH.

MA'AM!!

MA'AM.

MA'AM.

MA'AM!!

OPEN THE DOOR!!

OPEN THE DOOR!!

MA'AM ...

GOOD-NESS, YOZO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?

CHAK CHAK

KLAT-TER

FLIK

音録

Y- YOZO...

HIROKO!

SMACK

NN! NN!

AAH! NGAAH!

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, MEDICINE ...

I'M BEGGING YOU...

HIROKO!

HIROKO.

SO IT'S FINE AND GOOD FOR YOU, BUT NOT FOR ME?!

BUT YOU TAKE IT, TOO.

YOU MUSTN'T. YOU'LL REALLY BE IN TROUBLE IF YOU KEEP UP LIKE THIS.

HIROKO... FOR THE LOVE OF GOD...

I'M BEGGING YOU...

I USE IT PROPERLY, TO STOP THE PAIN. I WON'T BECOME ADDICTED.

AND YOU TOO MUST ONLY USE IT WHEN YOU FEEL THAT YOU SIMPLY MUST HAVE A DRINK.

I'LL... I'LL DO THAT, I PROMISE.

THUD

YOU MUSTN'T!

YOU MUSTN'T!

AH!

UNNNH.

UNH ...

...

ARE YOU HURT?

OH! I'M SORRY...

OWW...

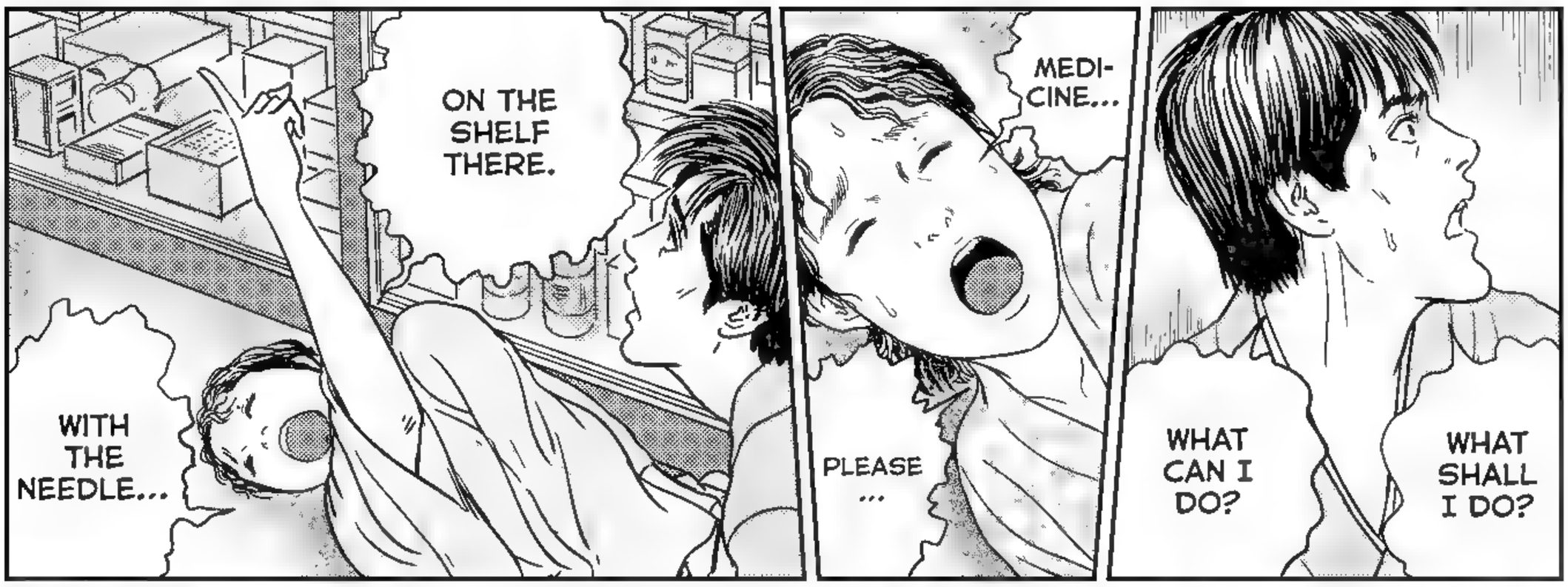
OW...

HIROKO?

IT HURTS...

HIROKO!!

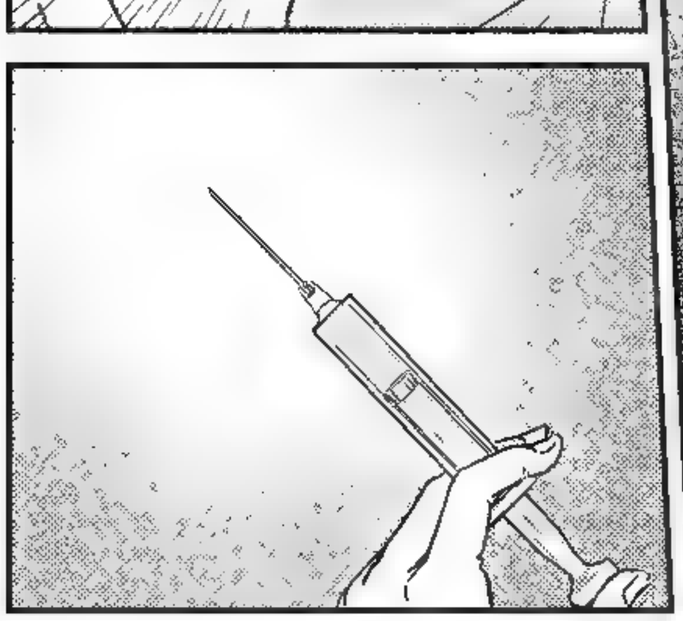
IT HURTS!


ON THE SHELF THERE.
WITH THE NEEDLE...
MEDI-CINE...
PLEASE ...
WHAT CAN I DO?
WHAT SHALL I DO?

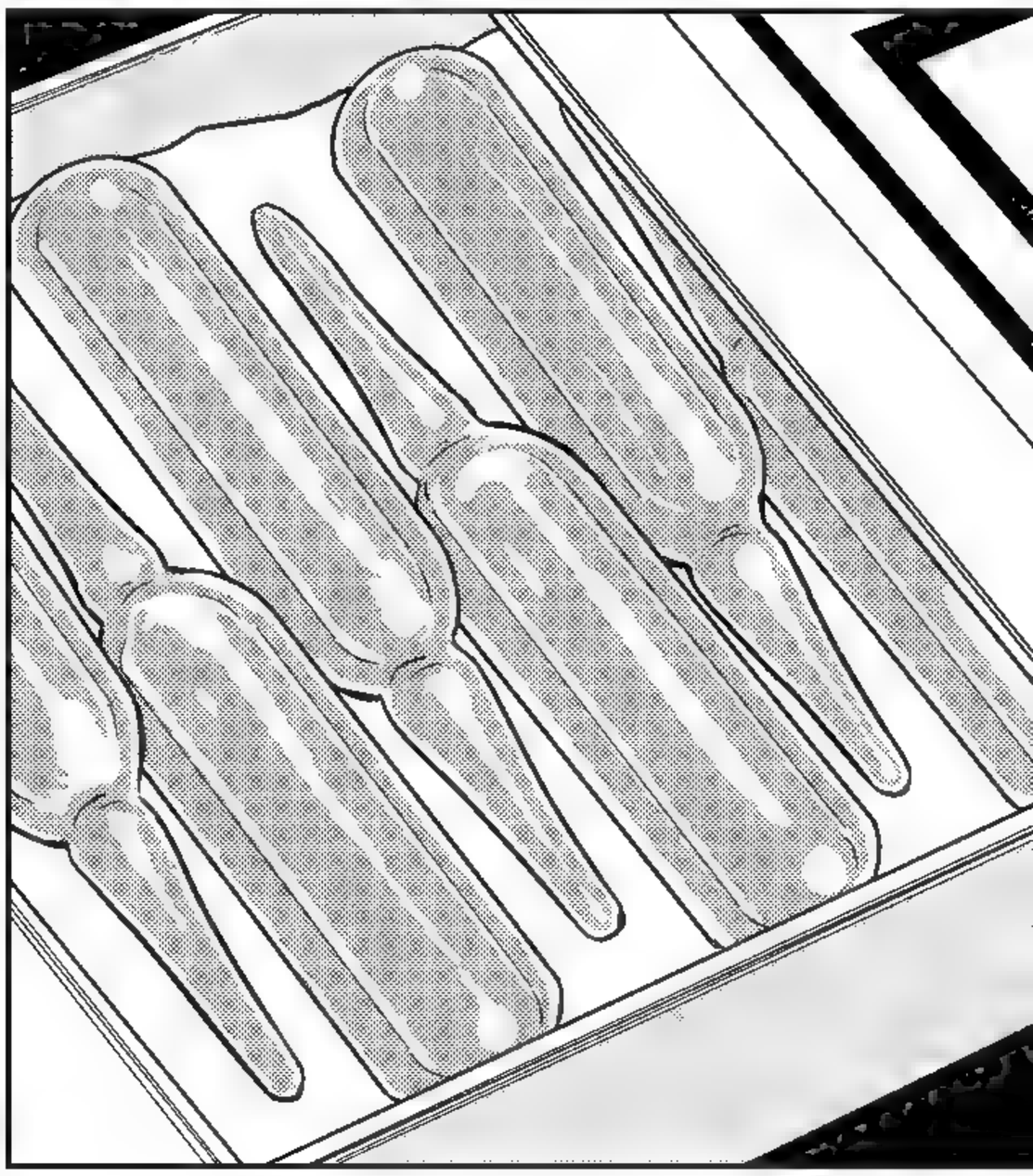
オヒルモ酸塩

JUST A MOMENT.

I-I'LL GET IT READY STRAIGHT-AWAY!



GULP



PLEASE! IT'S AGONY!

IT HURTS!

I'M COMING.

IS IT NOT READY YET...?

YOZO!

PSHK

I'LL GIVE YOU A SHOT RIGHT NOW.

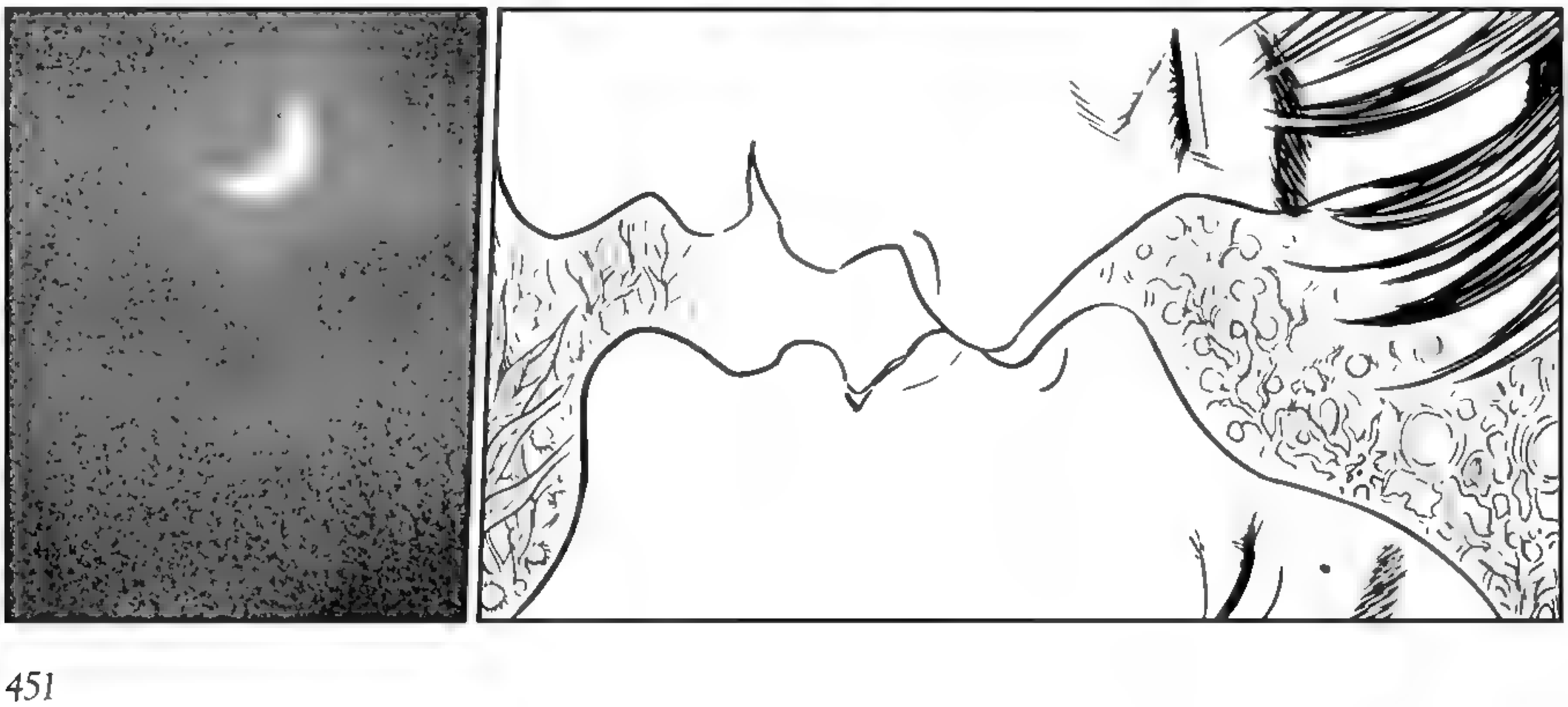
I'M SORRY.

I'LL TAKE YOU TO YOUR ROOM.

HIROKO.

AH!

AAAAAH!!



FSH

HSF

FSH FSH

OH... LET ME SEE.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE IMAGE SO CLEARLY BEFORE!

THE SPIRIT'S REALLY TAKEN ME! IT'S SO WONDERFUL TO PAINT WITH INK.

GOOD-NESS!

SNAP
CRACK
I FEEL THE SPIRIT COMING OVER ME, TOO!
YOZO, YOU'RE REALLY QUITE THE ARTIST!
SNAP
CRACK
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
IT'S FINISHED!
...
SNAP
CRACK
CRACK
SNAP

We had to have had a connection in a previous life. We could never have been in such harmony otherwise.

I was moved like I'd never before been. Hiroko and I were not strangers.

HIROKO ...

HIROKOOOOOOO!

FATHER, WHY DIDN'T YOU CALL ME?

GOODNESS! YOU'VE PEED ALL OVER THE PLACE.

I HAVE TO PEEEEEE!

ALL RIGHT. I'M COMING!

NOW, YOU KNOW HE'S DEAD, FATHER.

OHH... THAT'S RIGHT.

NO, THAT'S A CUSTOMER.

OH... WHERE'D NORIO GO?

WHO'S THAT? NORIO?

I CALLED YOU SO MANY TIMES. WHY DIDN'T YOU COME?

I'LL BE GETTING ON MY WAY.

MA'AM ...

I'LL SEE YOU ANOTHER TIME THEN.

YOU WILL?

EXCUSE ME!

EXCUSE ME!

EXCUSE ME!

YES!

I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!

...

THAT VOICE...

A CUSTOMER SO EARLY IN THE MORNING.

ALREADY A BUSY DAY!

SHF

丸山
YOSHIKO
...

CHAIN No.19: Doubt

WHAT IS YOSHIKO DOING HERE?

HOW CAN I HELP YOU, MA'AM?

I'D LIKE TO BUY THIS MEDICINE.

UM...

HE'S A MANGA ARTIST, AND HE SAYS HIS WORK IS GOING VERY WELL THANKS TO THIS MEDICINE.

WHEN HE INJECTS THIS, HE BECOMES A VERY LIVELY AND CHEERFUL MAN.

HE'S HOPELESS WITHOUT IT.

MY HUS-BAND ...

HOW AWFUL...

...

WHEN I THINK OF HIM SUFFERING SOMEWHERE RIGHT NOW, I FEEL SO BAD FOR HIM.

THE NIGHTS SEEM ESPECIALLY HARD. HE WENT OUT LAST NIGHT AND DIDN'T COME HOME...

AND IT'S HARD FOR ME, TOO.

BUT IT SEEMS VERY PAINFUL FOR HIM WHEN HE RUNS OUT.

SO I HAVE TO HAVE THAT TO BUY IT?

WHAT?

I CAN'T SELL IT WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION.

BUT THIS MEDICINE ...

I SEE...

I'LL COME BACK LATER.

I UNDER-STAND.

YOUR WIFE...

...IS LOVELY, *HM?*

EACH AMPOULE ...

...IS A PRECIOUS TREASURE.

OH! YES. I GOT A DOZEN.

YOU BOUGHT SOME MEDICINE?

YOZO ?

WHAT?

I WANT YOU TO FOCUS ON YOUR WORK.

BUT IT'S A WIFE'S DUTY TO SUPPORT HER HUSBAND.

IT'S FINE. I CAN GET THEM MYSELF.

IF YOU HAD GIVEN ME YOUR PRESCRIPTION, I COULD'VE GOTTEN SOME FOR YOU.

YOU'RE GOING TO BUY MEDICINE, AREN'T YOU?!

WAIT!

YOZO!

A-ALL RIGHT.

THEN I'LL COME WITH YOU.

NO, I'M JUST GOING FOR A WALK.

YOZO...

YOZO?!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAAH!

MY WIFE MIGHT BE COMING.

HIDE ME IN YOUR ROOM FOR A MINUTE.

HIROKO!

EXCUSE ME.

TO BUY THAT MEDICINE...

HAS MY HUSBAND COME BY?

...

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM.

NO.

SO YOU HAVEN'T ...

DID YOU USE ALL THE MEDICINE ALREADY? BUT I GAVE YOU A WHOLE DOZEN.

AAH, THANKS.

YOZO.

YOUR WIFE'S GONE.

YOZO...

...

...I CAME TODAY BECAUSE I WANTED TO SEE YOU.

ACTU-ALLY...

WELL, THAT'S TRUE, BUT...

HIROKO ...

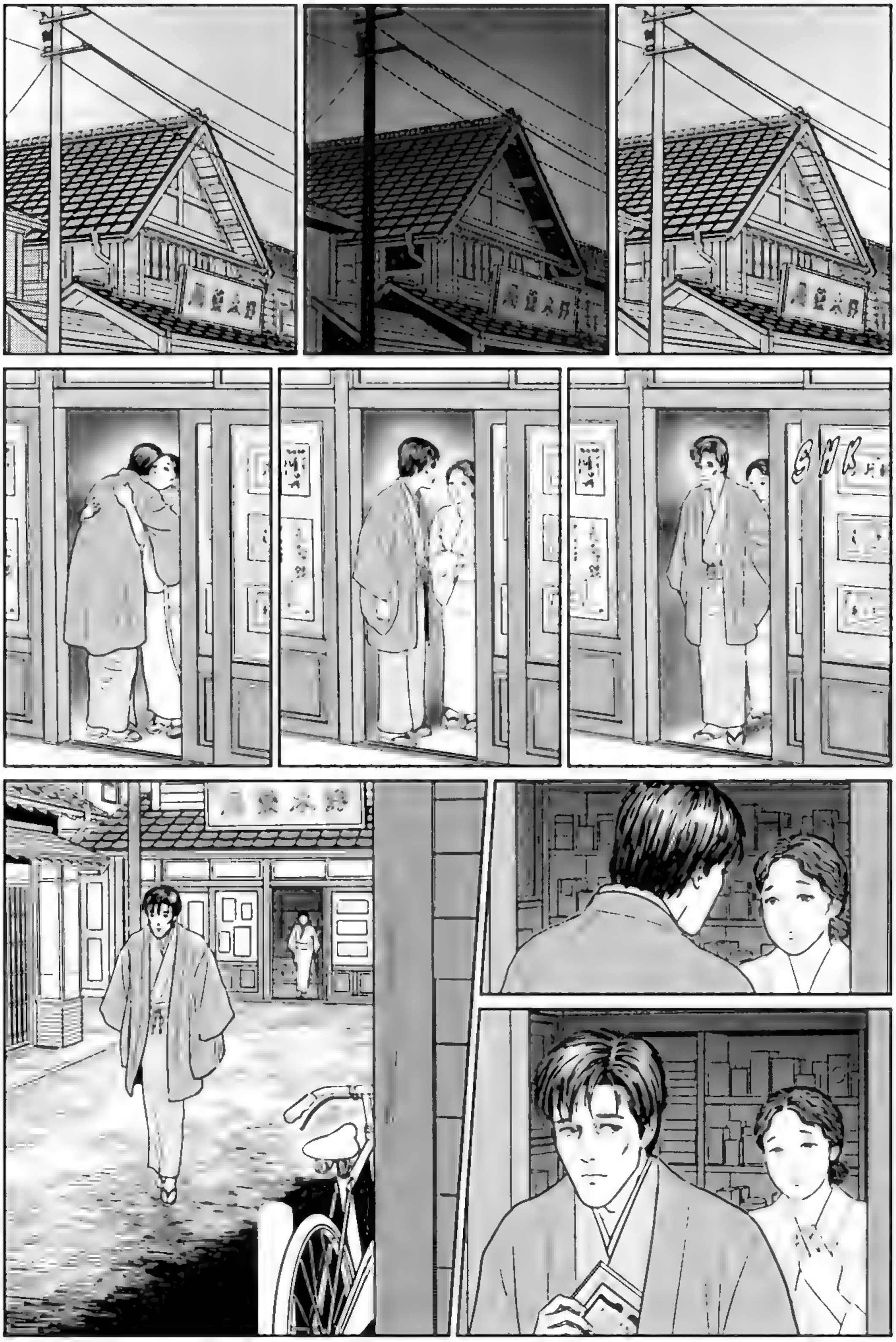
WHY SOMEONE LIKE ME...?

BUT YOU HAVE SUCH A PRETTY WIFE...

...ARE MY DESTINY.

YOU...

After so many years of life, I'd finally found her.
The words slipped unbidden from my mouth, but this was how I truly felt, from the bottom of my heart.
I was bound to this woman by the thread of fate from a previous life.



YOSHIKO
...

UNH!
UNH
UNH...

店商

UNH
UNH...

HAAH.

HAAH.

HAAH
HAAH.

HAAH!

HAAH.

HAAH!

And Yoshiko herself knew that only too well.

After all, Yoshiko had been unfaithful with Aoki from the newspaper, hadn't she?

As I caught my breath and calmed myself somewhat...

...I had the thought that I could perhaps carry myself a little taller.

I'M HOME...

So there was no reason for me to be on edge. I would simply remain calm before her.

SKRTCH SKRTCH SKRTCH

OH...

YES.

OH? YOU'RE BACK?

YOU DIDN'T COME HOME LAST NIGHT. I WAS WORRIED.

I'M SORRY. YOU MUST BE HUNGRY?

I'LL FIX BREAKFAST RIGHT AWAY.

...

In fact, perhaps she is relieved or even glad...

...now that husband stands in the same position as wife.

So Yoshiko does know her place, that she's no right to say anything.

"You mustn't. It would be dreadful if you became an addict."

Hiroko would say, even as she awaited me expectantly every time.

After that, whenever I ran out of the medicine...

局 薬 本 打

...I would go half-openly to Hiroko's.

...WELCOME BACK.

After spending several days with Hiroko...

...I would take a box of medicine and return to Yoshiko.

FWP

DID I LOCK THE DOOR?

DID...

...

THANK GOOD-NESS.

IT WAS LOCKED.

...

ZSH

ZSH

THAT'S THE THIRD TIME TONIGHT SHE'S CHECKED THE DOOR.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HER?

ZSH

ZSH

PHEW!

ZSH

ZSH

SCRUG

SCRUG

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB

SCRUB SCRUB

SCRUB SCRUB

THE DIRT JUST WON'T COME OUT AT ALL.

IT WON'T COME OUT...

SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB SCRUB

SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH

MAYBE MY HANDS ARE DIRTY.

SPLSH
SPLSH

SPLSH
SPLSH

IT JUST WON'T COME OFF!

IT WON'T COME OFF.

SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH
SPLSH

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, *HM?*

OH! THE MADAM FROM KYOBASHI.

YOCHAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?

YOSHI-KO!

OH! THERE SHE IS!

SPLISH

SPLISH

WHERE'S YOSHI-KO?

I WAS IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD, SO I STOPPED BY.

I BROUGHT SOME YUMMY *YOKAN* JELLIES. COME, HAVE SOME WITH ME.

OH... IT'S YOU, AUNTIE.

Y—

YOSHIKO ?

EAT UP.

I HOPE YOU LIKE THEM.

FWP

TRY SOME, YOSHIKO. IT'S SO GOOD.

MM! DELICIOUS.

YOSHIKO ...

WHAT'S WRONG?

WHAT ?

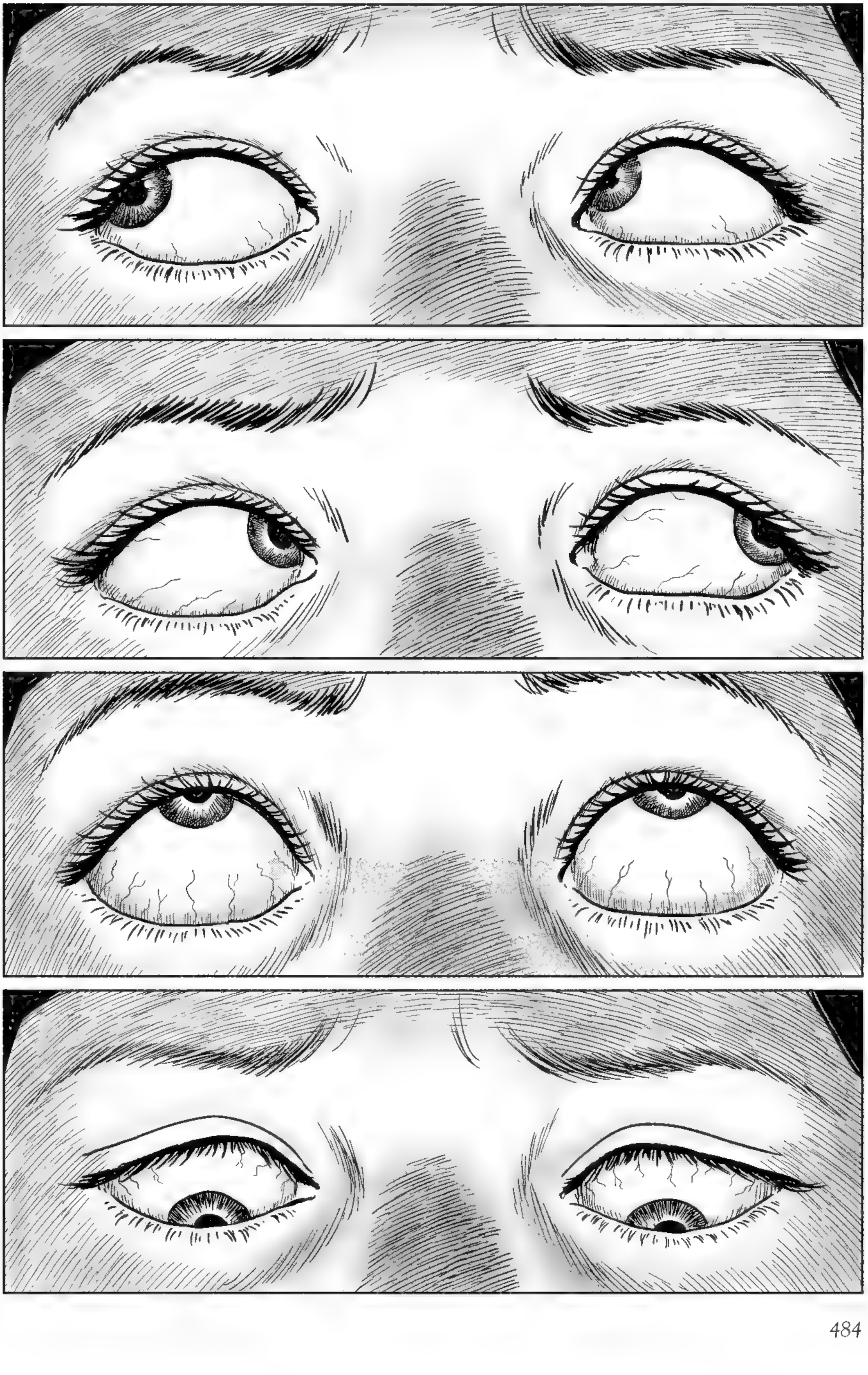
THEY'RE POISONED ...

POISON ...

Something...

...had started to come loose inside Yoshiko.

CHAIN No. 20: Obsession



YOU'VE BEEN JUST WHIPPING YOUR HEAD AROUND...

YOSHIKO... WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YOZO ...

...

FWP

FWP

WHAT?

NO ONE'S PEEPING.

YOU NOTICED IT, TOO, RIGHT?

SOMEONE'S PEEPING.

THIS ROOM.

...

THE PEOPLE ON THE SECOND FLOOR ARE PEEPING THROUGH THE CEILING.

SEE? THROUGH THAT HOLE...

...THAT KYOBASHI BAR MADAM IS PEEPING IN...

AND... ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT DOOR...

BECAUSE SHE'S HAVING SEX WITH YOU...

SHE'S WATCHING US.

RIDICULOUS. SHE DID STOP BY TODAY...

BUT SHE LEFT EARLIER, NOW DIDN'T SHE?

THERE'S NO ONE HERE.

OF COURSE NOT... SEE?

THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

WE DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF RELATION-SHIP ANY-MORE.

YOU'RE SLEEPING WITH HER EVEN NOW.

LIAR...

OKAY? YOU'RE OVER-THINKING THINGS.

KOFF!

KOFF!

KOFF!

HNGH!

GULP

PANT

WHEEZE

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

KOFF! KOFF!

KOFF! KOFF!

AAH, YOU POOR DEAR...

But now she was filled with nothing but doubt.

Yoshiko had been a genius at trusting people, having no concept of doubt.

EVERY-THING'S COVERED IN GERMS.

I HAVE TO CLEAN.

...grew longer than the time I spent at home.

And gradually, the time I spent at Hiroko's...

I suppose it was I who made her that way. But even knowing this...

...I didn't so much as try to hold back my feelings of annoyance...

...and my feet naturally turned to Hiroko's pharmacy.

OH, STOP THAT, YOZO. YOU SCAMP! I MEAN, "FATHER," REALLY.

DID YOU WANT ME TO RUB YOUR FEET AGAIN?

YES? WHAT IS IT, FATHER?

NORIO.

NORIO ...

HIROKO... YOU DON'T NEED TO CONCERN YOURSELF WITH THAT SORT OF THING.

THAT PRETTY WIFE OF YOURS IS WORRIED.

YOZO... ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULDN'T BE GETTING HOME SOON?

EXCUSE ME.

SAY THAT I'M NOT HERE.

IT'S YOUR WIFE.

HELLO THERE...

UM...

I'D LIKE SOME POISONOUS HERBS.

WHAT ?!

I NEED OPIUM.

I'D LIKE SOME POISONOUS HERBS TO MAKE OPIUM.

BUT THE PRICE OF THE MEDICINE IS NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT. SO I THOUGHT IT BETTER TO CULTIVATE THE OPIUM...

IT SEEMS THE MEDICINE MY HUSBAND USES IS OPIUM.

WHEN HE INJECTS THE OPIUM, HE BECOMES VERY LIVELY AND THE MOOD FOR WORK COMES OVER HIM.

AAH...
I'M SORRY TO SAY THAT WE DON'T CARRY POPPY SEEDS HERE.

WHAT? BUT...

COULD YOU PLEASE SELL ME SOME POPPY SEEDS?

FROM WHAT I HEAR, POPPIES TURN INTO OPIUM.

THEY'RE JUST FOR DECORATION. THEY'RE NOT FOR SALE.

OH! THOSE.

AREN'T THOSE POPPIES?

I SEE...

...

THANKS.

YOUR WIFE... SHE'S GONE HOME.

I'LL JUST USE THE BATHROOM FIRST.

YEAH... OKAY...

I... I FEEL BAD FOR HER.

YOZO... PERHAPS YOU SHOULD GO HOME SOME-TIMES?

RGTL RGTL
KREE

RGTL RGTL

I-IT'S NOTH-ING.

YOZO, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE SO PALE.

SHE CAN'T MAKE OPIUM FROM THOSE WEEDS...

WHAT IS SHE THINKING DIGGING THROUGH THERE?

MY...

YOSHIKO TOOK THE POISONOUS HERBS YOU TOSSED AWAY OUT BACK...

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU!

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU!

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU!

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU!

YO-CHAN...

OH! MADAM!

Y-YOSHIKO ...

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU! NAMU AMIDA BUTSU!

SHE'S FINE.

AH... RIGHT.

IT'S GOTTEN MUCH WORSE, HASN'T IT? WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED TO HER?

YOSHIKO WAS ACTING A BIT STRANGELY THE OTHER DAY, SO I CAME BY AGAIN TODAY.

I SUP-POSE.

YEAH.

SHOULDN'T YOU HAVE THE DOCTOR TAKE A LOOK AT HER? WHY DON'T YOU TALK TO DR. SHIBUTA?

THAT IS FINE?

"I WILL DIE. COME BACK SOON..."

局藥本野

...running away to Hiroko's.

But I simply kept...

*Yozo Lion mask

A telegram arrived in the evening.

R- RIGHT...

YOZO... YOU HAVE TO GO HOME TO HER!

KLATTER

KRSCH

KNCH

KNCH

THOSE AREN'T POISONOUS, APPARENTLY.

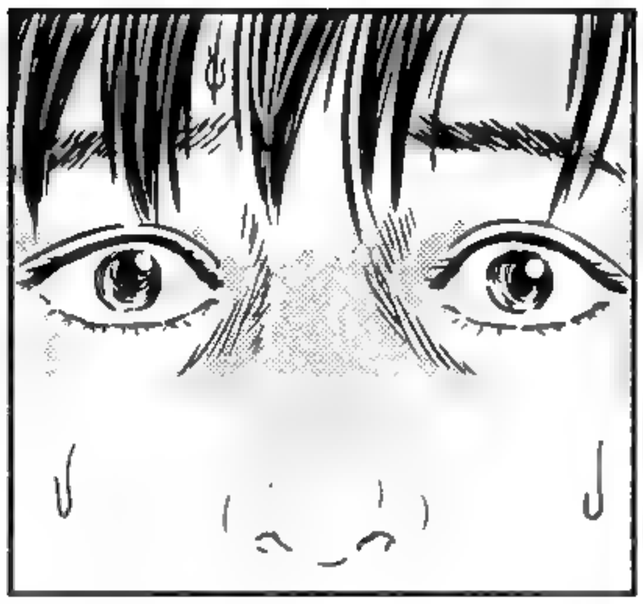
YOSHIKO.

MSCH MSCH

IF YOU DIE ON ME, I WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP GOING.

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYONE.

BUT DON'T TALK ABOUT DYING ANYMORE.



...I fled to Hiroko's once more.
Unable to endure it...

LIAR.

HERBS THAT COULD KILL A PERSON.
COULD I HAVE SOME POISONOUS HERBS?

EXCUSE ME.
That night—

Y-YES?

I'M GOING TO...

...KILL MY HUSBAND AND THEN MYSELF.

WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO WITH THEM?

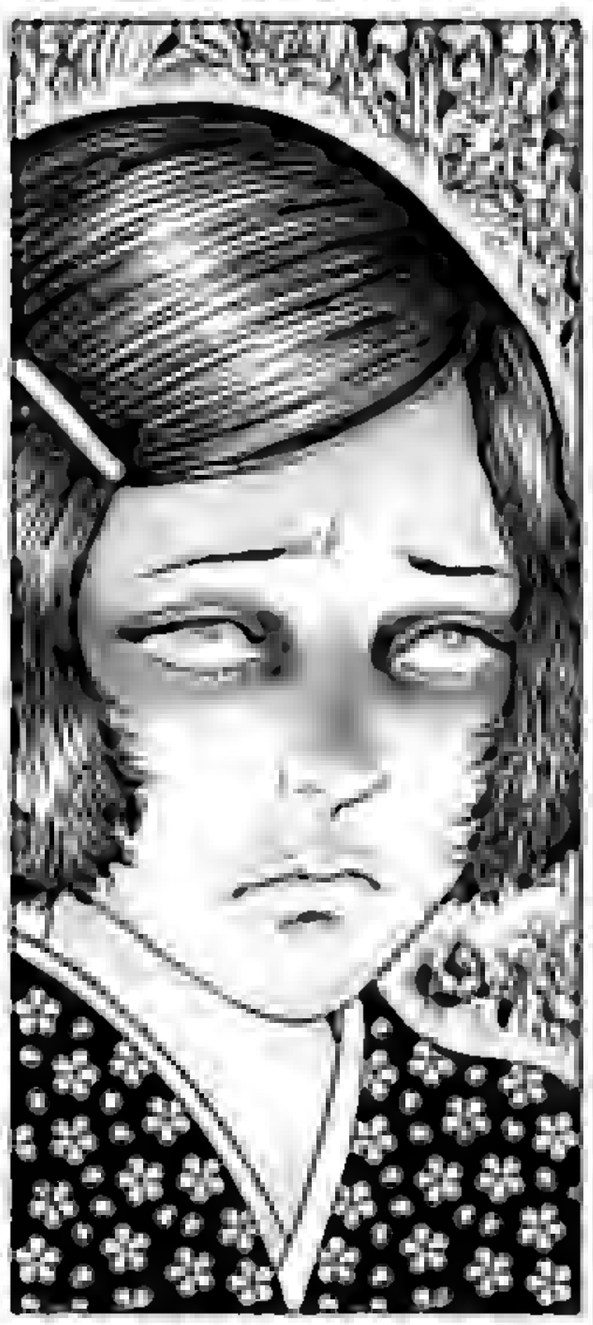
I DON'T CARRY ANY SUCH HERBS.

I'VE DONE SOMETHING TRULY AWFUL TO YOU, MRS. OBA.

P-PLEASE... DON'T DO SUCH A TERRIBLE THING...

...I BEG YOUR FORGIVE-NESS.

AS YOU CAN SEE...



CLASSES

HSLHSLHSL

HSLHSL

神丸

神龍俊

!

MRS. OBA!!

YOU MUSTN'T TAKE THEM! PLEASE GIVE THEM BACK!

MRS. OBA, THOSE...!

天寿丸

MRS. OBA!!

THERE'S WOLFSBANE IN THERE! IT'S EXTREMELY POISONOUS!!

PLEASE STOP!

MRS. OBA!!

AH!!

YANK

YOZO! PLEASE STOP YOUR WIFE!!

"...OTHER-WISE, I WILL DIE ALONE."

"COME HOME NOW..."

...another telegram came from Yoshiko.

An hour later...

IT'S ALL RIGHT...

IT'S ALL RIGHT...

PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO STOP YOUR WIFE.

YOZO!

PLEASE TELL ME YOUR ADDRESS!

IF YOU WON'T GO, I WILL!

I didn't go home.

...

IT'S ALL RIGHT ...

IT'S FINE...

The next day, a third telegram came.

Not from Yoshiko...

...but from the Kyobashi madam.

Telegram: Yoshiko dead, Return immediately

...Yoshiko was already laid out in her casket.

Two days later, when I went back to the apartment...

...the innocent beauty she had when I first met her.

Her face in death had taken back on...

CHAIN No. 21: No Longer Human

...YOUR WIFE DIED.

IT'S MY FAULT THAT...

NO, HIROKO... IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT...

YES. IT *IS* MY FAULT.

THESE... THESE DRIED HERBS SIMPLY HANGING HERE...

YOZO, I'M GOING TO BURN THESE IN THE BACK-YARD.

PLEASE HELP ME.

I...

SNAP

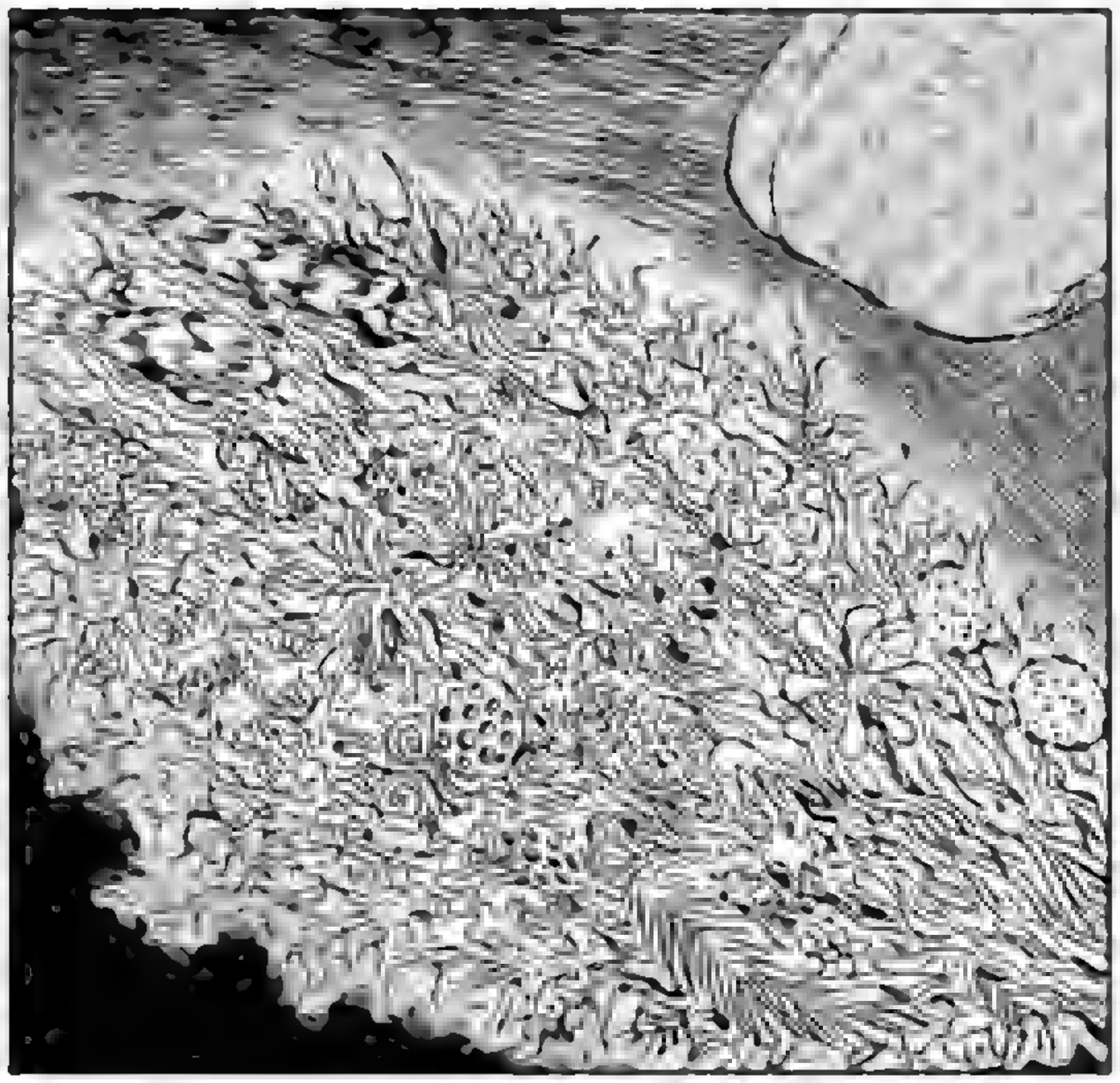
ZSH

...KILLED YOUR WIFE...

SNAP

ZSH

SMK



CRACK
CRACK

BOOMF

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

NEVER AGAIN. NO MORE DRIED HERBS...

I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD TO HAVE BEEN SO DRAWN TO THESE POISONOUS HERBS.

I NEED...

I NEED MEDICINE SOON...

BY THE WAY, HIROKO...

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

I'VE BEEN HOLDING ON SO FAR.

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

I DON'T WANT TO SAY THIS, BUT...

YOZO...

BUT I'M AT MY LIMIT.

...

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

?

THE MEDICINE... THE CREDIT WITH THE WHOLESALER'S TERRIFYINGLY LARGE.

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

YOZO!!

AAAH!!

WHOOSH

WHAP

WHAP

F-FATHER... FATHER'S STILL INSIDE!!

AAH! IT'S BURNING... BURNING!!

HIROKO !!

AH! HIROKO !!

HIROKO !!

KOFF!

HIROKO !!

HNGH!

FIIIIRE!!

TWO OF THEM !!
HEY! OVER HERE!!

NO...

THAT'S NOT HIROKO.

HIROKO !!

HIROKO !!

HIROKO !!

HIROKO !!

WHERE ARE YOU, HIROKO ?!

Weeping, I searched for her all over town.

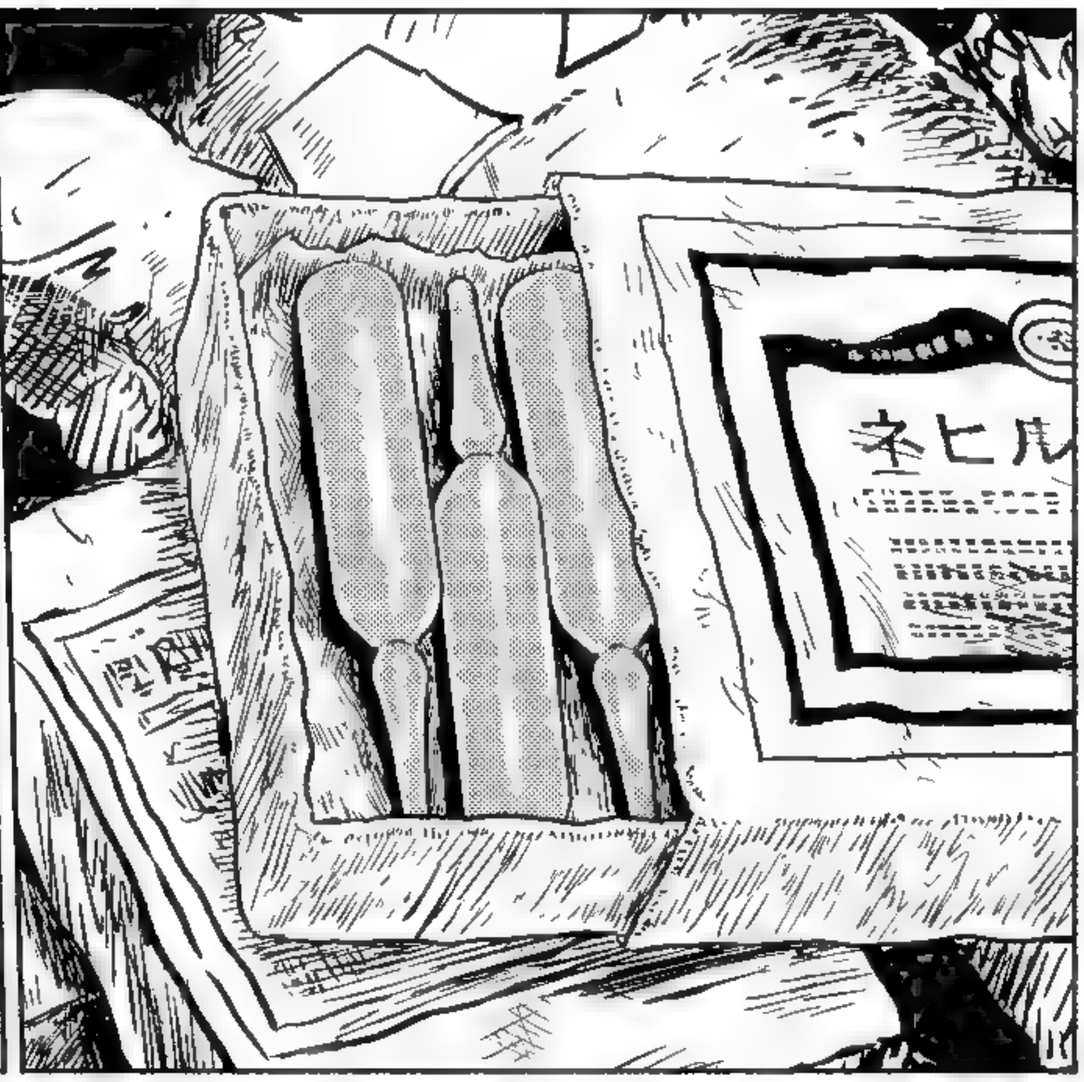
HIROKO !!

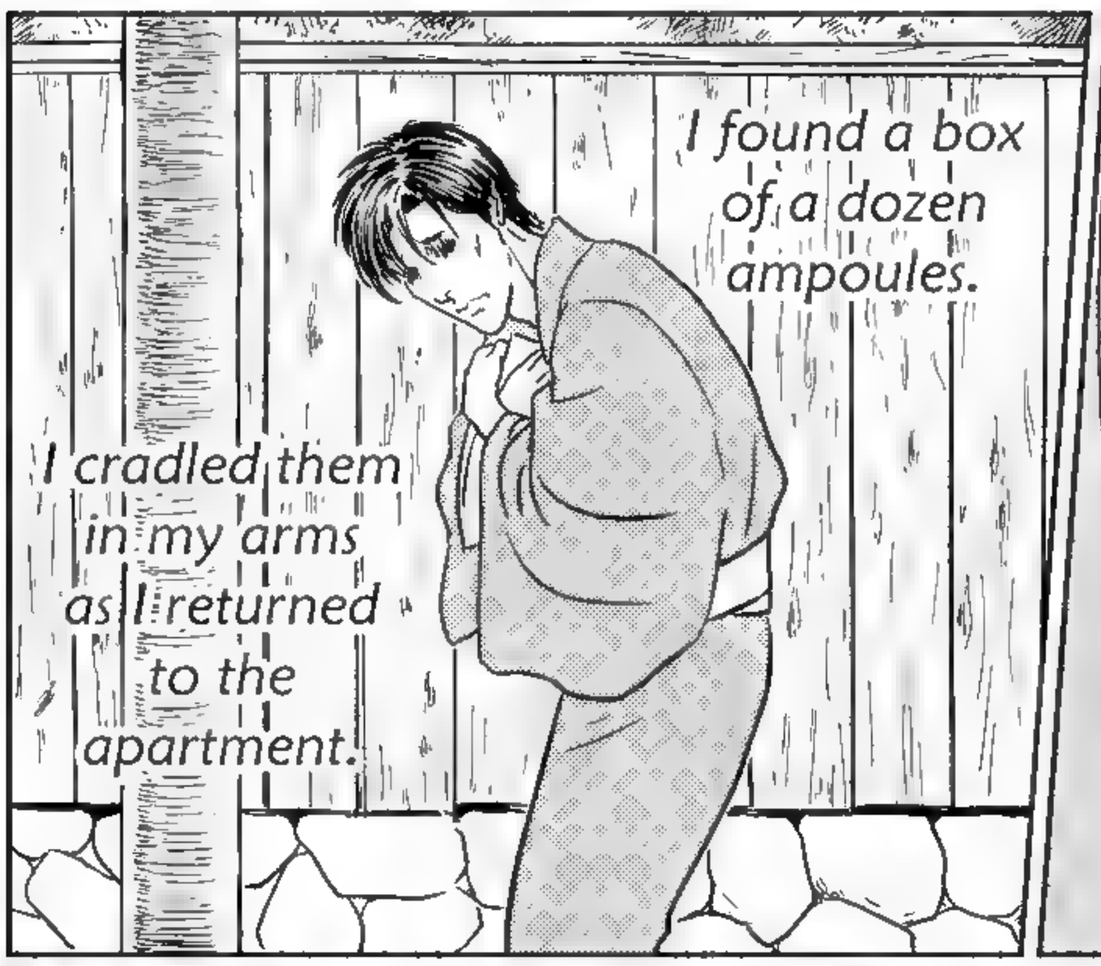
I kept calling her name.

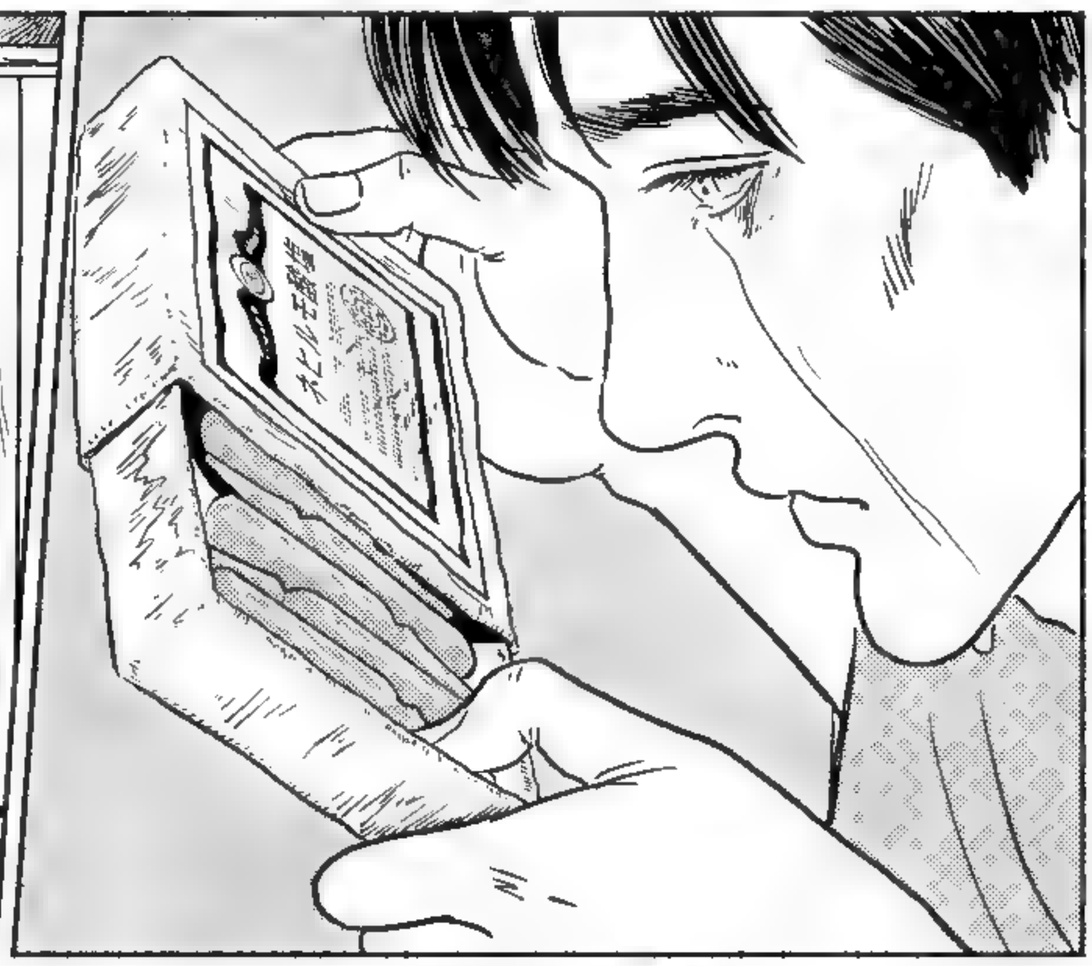
HIROKO !!

ネヒルモ酸塩

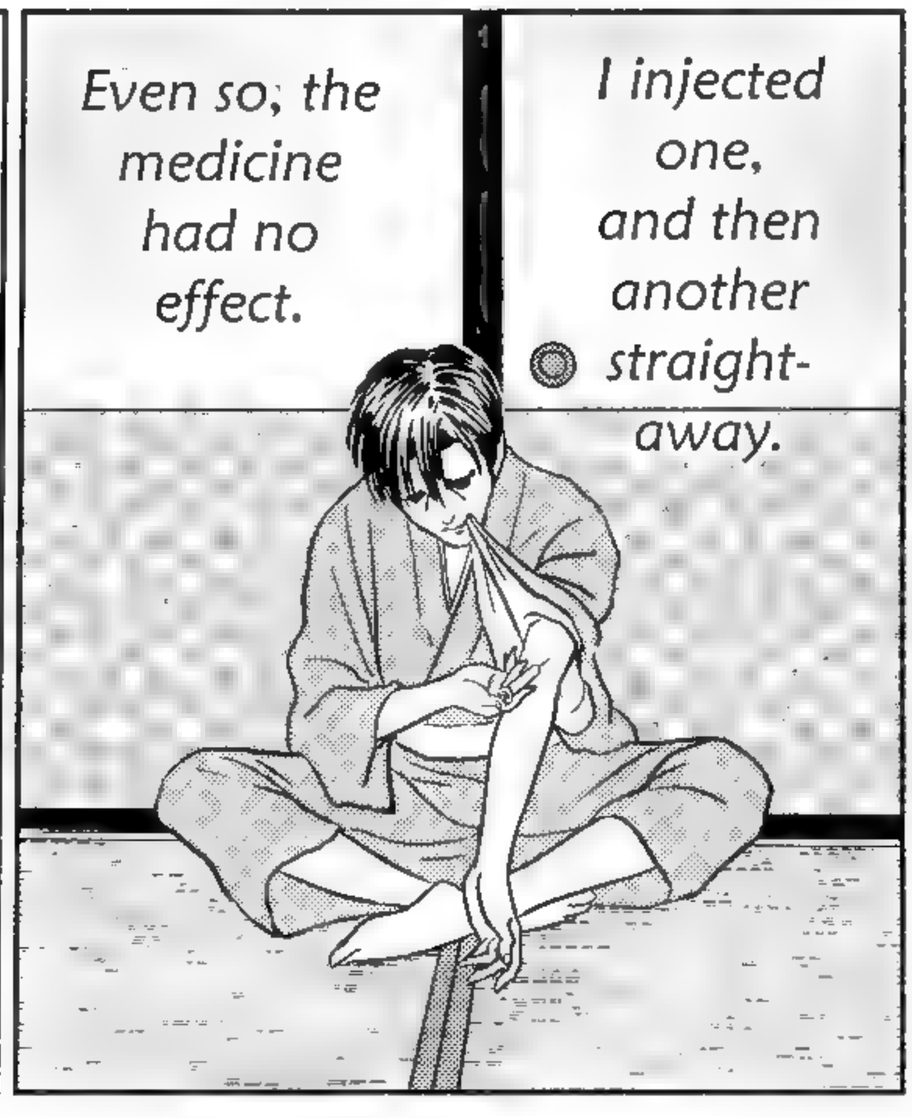
But she was nowhere to be found.


ネヒル


I found a box of a dozen ampoules.
I cradled them in my arms as I returned to the apartment.



HIROKO ...


Even so; the medicine had no effect.
I injected one, and then another straight-away.

Hiroko had been a priceless treasure.

After so many ups and downs, I'd finally met her, the woman of my destiny.

...and throw myself into the river. But that afternoon...

I made up my mind to give myself the remaining ten shots...

HEY, LADY-KILLER! YOU HOME?

Horiki...

Madam.

Flatfish.

HORIKI ...

I HEAR YOU'VE COUGHED UP BLOOD. YOU CAN'T PUSH YOURSELF LIKE THAT.

OBA.

UUNH.

UNH...

...the likes of which I had never before seen on his face.

Horiki's smile was gentle...

WHAT?

MADAM ...

I WANT TO GO SOMEWHERE WHERE THERE AREN'T ANY WOMEN.

I...

YOCHAN... I KNOW YOU'RE SUFFERING, BUT YOU HAVE TO STOP TAKING THE MEDICINE.

SHALL WE GO RIGHT NOW?

AN EXCELLENT IDEA.

A PLACE WITHOUT WOMEN?

VRRRR

TO A PLACE WITHOUT WOMEN.

NOW LISTEN, YOZO.

UNH UNH! UNH!

UNH! UNH!

YOU LEAVE EVERYTHING ELSE TO US.

YOU'LL HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL FOR THE TIME BEING.

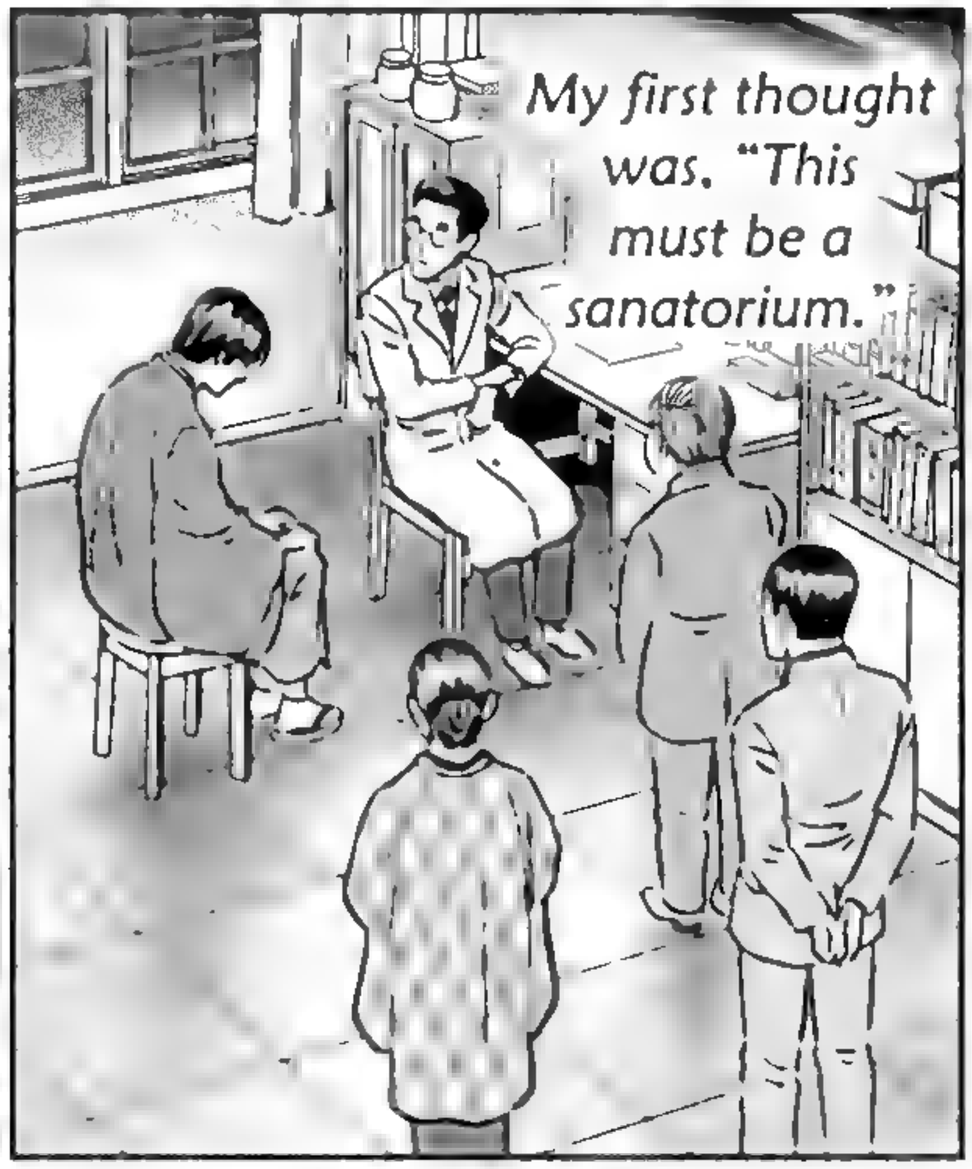
THEY'LL TREAT YOUR ADDIC-TION.

KREE

ALL RIGHT. WE'RE HERE.

VRRRRR

YOU'LL NEED TO REST AND RECUPERATE HERE FOR A WHILE.


My first thought was, "This must be a sanatorium."

...and the key grated in the lock behind me.

CHEAK

KA-CHAK

He ushered me to a ward...

...and the young doctor showed me around.

Flatfish, Horiki and Madam left me there alone...

I was in a mental hospital.

ALL RIGHT. YOUR ROOM IS HERE.

They say, I know, that most lunatics claim the same thing.

FWP

I was no longer a criminal—I was a lunatic. But no, I was definitely not mad.

I had now ceased utterly...

...to be a human being.

Disqualified.

As a human being.

The terrifying symptoms of withdrawal began.

...

...women pushed their way in like an avalanche.

In this hospital ward where there were supposedly no women.:.

...and I was on the verge of suffocation.

In an instant, the room was packed with the flesh of women...

PLEASE! LET ME OUT!!

LET ME OUT!

LET ME GO!!

LET ME OUT!!

ILLEGAL CONFINE-MENT!!

I'LL REMEMBER THIS! WHEN I GET OUT, I'LL SUE YOU!!

FRAUDU-LENT DOCTORS !!

THIS FRAUD OF A HOSPITAL !!

I AM *NOT* A LUNATIC!!

GET ME OUT!!

GET ME OUT OF HERE!!

CLANG

GAAAH!!

CLANG

AAAAH!!

I NEED MY PRIDE BACK!! EVEN IT'S A LIE!!

I'M A GOLDFISH !!

FREEDOM!! GREEN GRASSY FIELDS!!

ONLY KEPT IN A BOWL, IT WON'T LAST A MONTH!!

IF YOU GIVE ME ONE SHOT, I WILL WEEP WITH HUMAN MERCY!!

DOCTOR, PLEASE! I'M BEGGING YOU! JUST ONE SHOT!

BE QUIET! IT'S THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.

I'LL GIVE YOU A TRAN-QUILIZER.

NOW, LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM.

I saw for the first time...

...a truly mad man.

...A CHOSEN ECSTASY AND UNEASE!!

I HAVE TWO PIECES IN ME...

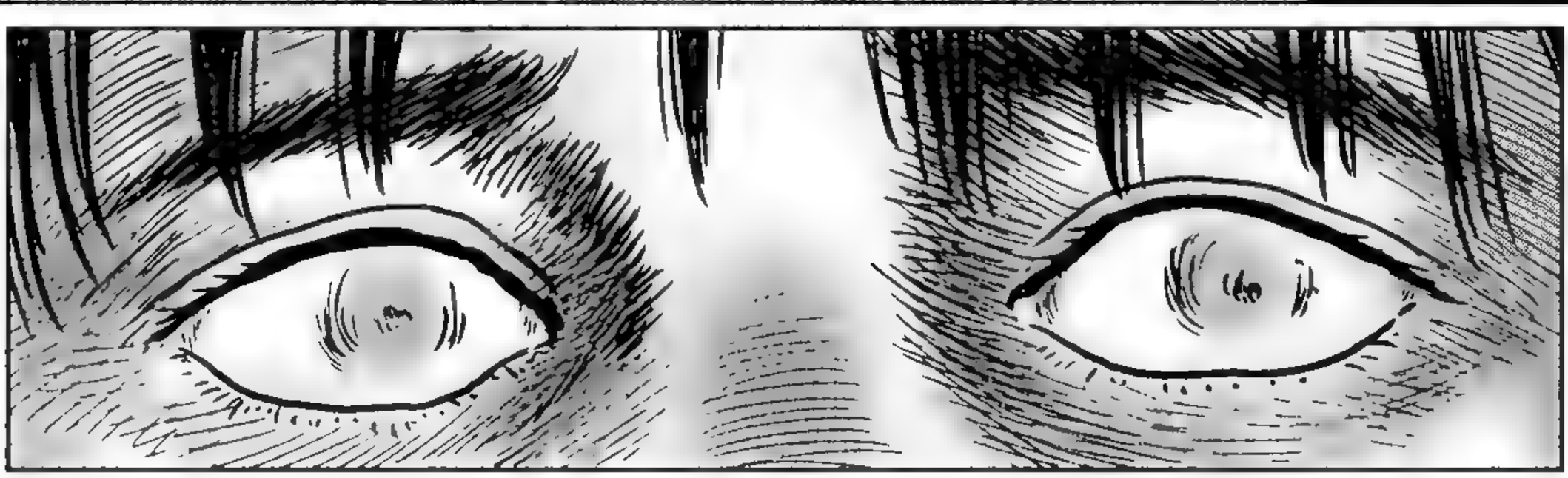
STAGGER

STAGGER

It was...

...me.

CHAIN No. 22: Real Name



The lunatic...

...was my own self.

...perhaps it was the doppelgänger...

...Ryunosuke Akutagawa himself had also seen?

If it was not, then...

This was no doubt a hallucination caused by the withdrawal.

IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN A VISION...

A VISION ...

Those who see a vision of themselves will soon be visited by death.

That was how the story went.

YOZOOOOOO.

YOZOOOOO.

SEE? HERE THEY COME AGAIN...

AAAH!

FORGIVE ME!!

HELP !!

YOZO
...

...IT'S
SO HOT...
HELP ME...

YOZO...
IT'S ME...
HIROKO...

THUD

YOU'RE NOT HIROKO.

N-NO ...

SNAP

KA-CHAK

YOZOO-OOO.

THUD

YOZOO-OOO.

SOME-
ONE,
HELP...

SOME-
ONE...

...ARE YOU?
...OHM

The corridor was long, so long, I felt as though it went on without end.

I fled desperately.

YOZOO-OOO!

YOZOO-OOO!

YOU DID IT ON PURPOSE...

ON PURPOSE ...

OBAAAAAA!

HAAH! HAAH!

UNH...

EEYAA-AAAH!!

FORGIVE ME...

FORGIVE ME...

FOR-GIVE ME!!

WHAT ...

...ARE YOU?

I...

I AM A CLOWN ...!

I...

MINE HAS BEEN A LIFE FULL OF LIES!!

I'M A CLOWN.

I'VE LIVED A LIE.

MY LIES DROVE MY CLASSMATE TAKEICHI TO SUICIDE.

I'VE PLAYED THE CLOWN ALL THIS TIME.

IT WAS TO DECEIVE OTHERS.

AS A RESULT, I BROUGHT UNFATHOMABLE MISFORTUNE TO THOSE AROUND ME.

...AND I CREATED AN ACCURSED CHILD WITH THE YOUNGER!

WHAAA

I TURNED HER INTO A PITCH-BLACK CHARRED CORPSE!!

AND THE WOMAN AT THE PHARMACY! SHE WAS UTTERLY BLAMELESS.

I CANNOT BE FORGIVEN FOR THIS.

THEY'RE ALL VICTIMS OF MY OWN CLOWNING.

A week or so passed...

...and the withdrawal symptoms disappeared.

...

WH-WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU REALLY?

AND YOU.

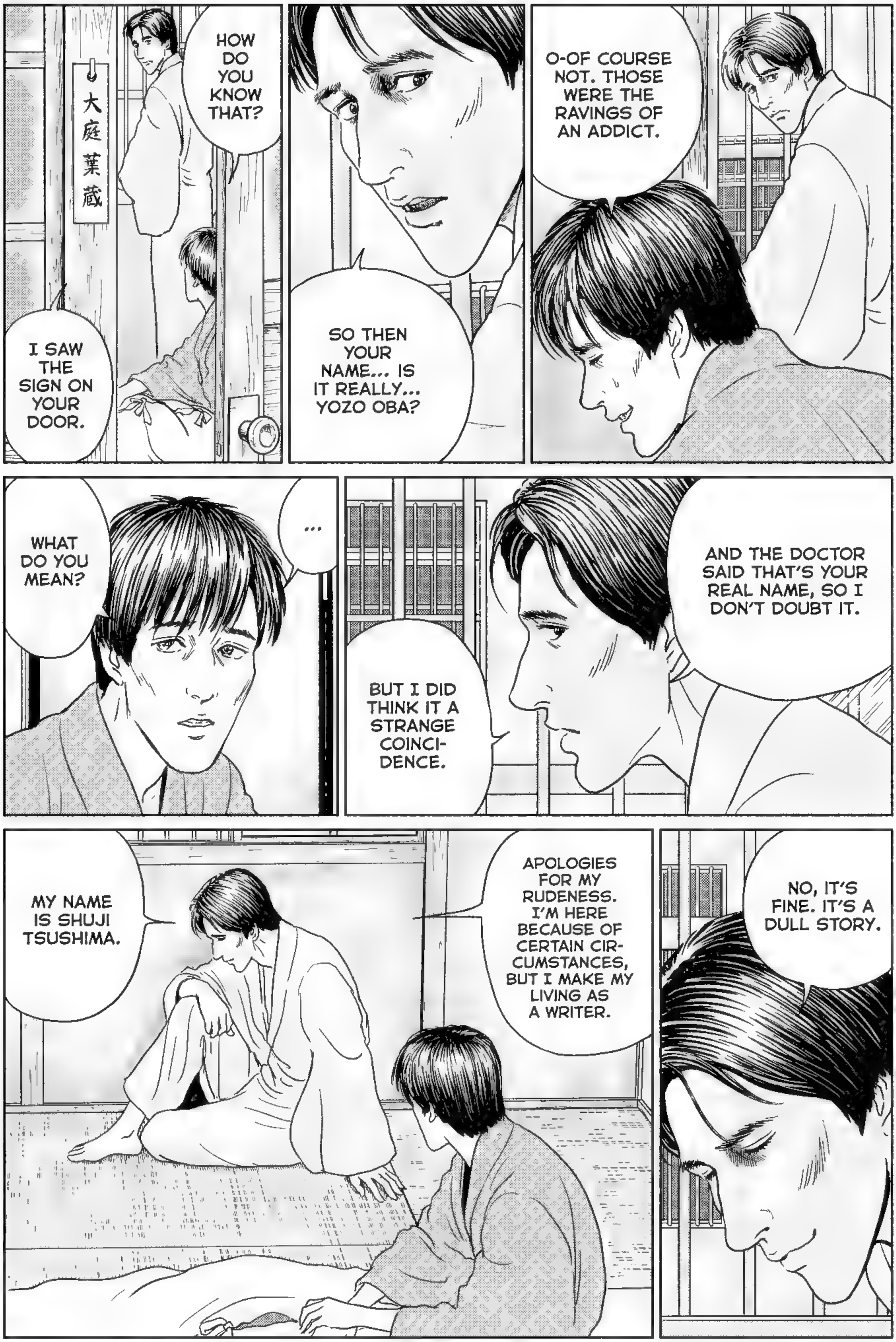
YES... YOU CONFESSED TO ME THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR HISTORY WHILE YOU SUFFERED THROUGH WITHDRAWAL.

WAS THAT ALL TRUE?

...IN THE CORRIDOR THAT NIGHT...

WHAT?! DID YOU PERHAPS ...

*Yozo Oba


大庭葉蔵
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I SAW THE SIGN ON YOUR DOOR.
SO THEN YOUR NAME... IS IT REALLY... YOZO OBA?
O-OF COURSE NOT. THOSE WERE THE RAVINGS OF AN ADDICT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...
BUT I DID THINK IT A STRANGE COINCI-DENCE.
AND THE DOCTOR SAID THAT'S YOUR REAL NAME, SO I DON'T DOUBT IT.
MY NAME IS SHUJI TSUSHIMA.
APOLOGIES FOR MY RUDENESS. I'M HERE BECAUSE OF CERTAIN CIR-CUMSTANCES, BUT I MAKE MY LIVING AS A WRITER.
NO, IT'S FINE. IT'S A DULL STORY.

...DAZAI?

OSAMU...

I WRITE SILLY LITTLE NOVELS UNDER THE NAME OSAMU DAZAI.

HAVEN'T HEARD OF ME?

I'M STILL JUST GETTING STARTED.

SETTING THAT ASIDE...

WELL...

I'M SORRY.

NO.

OF COURSE, IT'S AN EASY THING TO SAY TO A STRANGER.

YOU MAY HAVE BEEN SUFFERING FROM WITHDRAWAL THAT NIGHT, BUT YOU STILL REPROACHED YOURSELF A GREAT DEAL.

IF YOU KEEP THAT UP, ALL WAYS WILL BE BLOCKED TO YOU.

...spent long hours together each day.

After that, I and the man with the strange pen name Dazai...

WHAT?! WHAT A WONDERFUL COVER!

THE LATER YEARS...

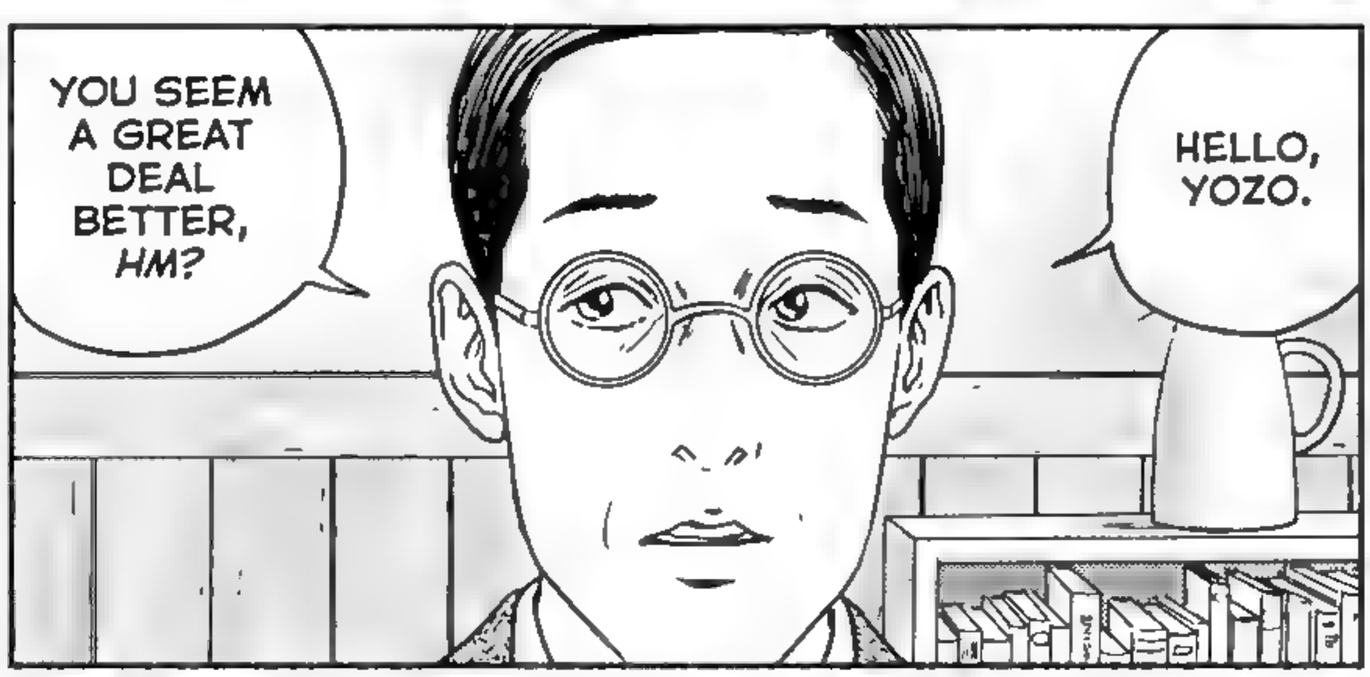
THIS IS MY FIRST STORY COLLECTION. I WANT YOU TO HAVE IT.

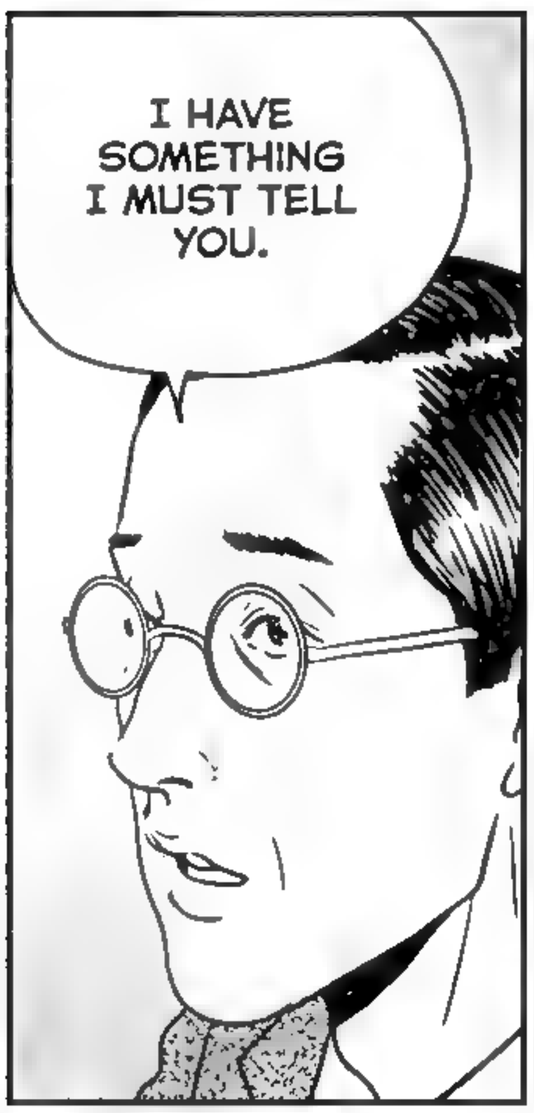
...

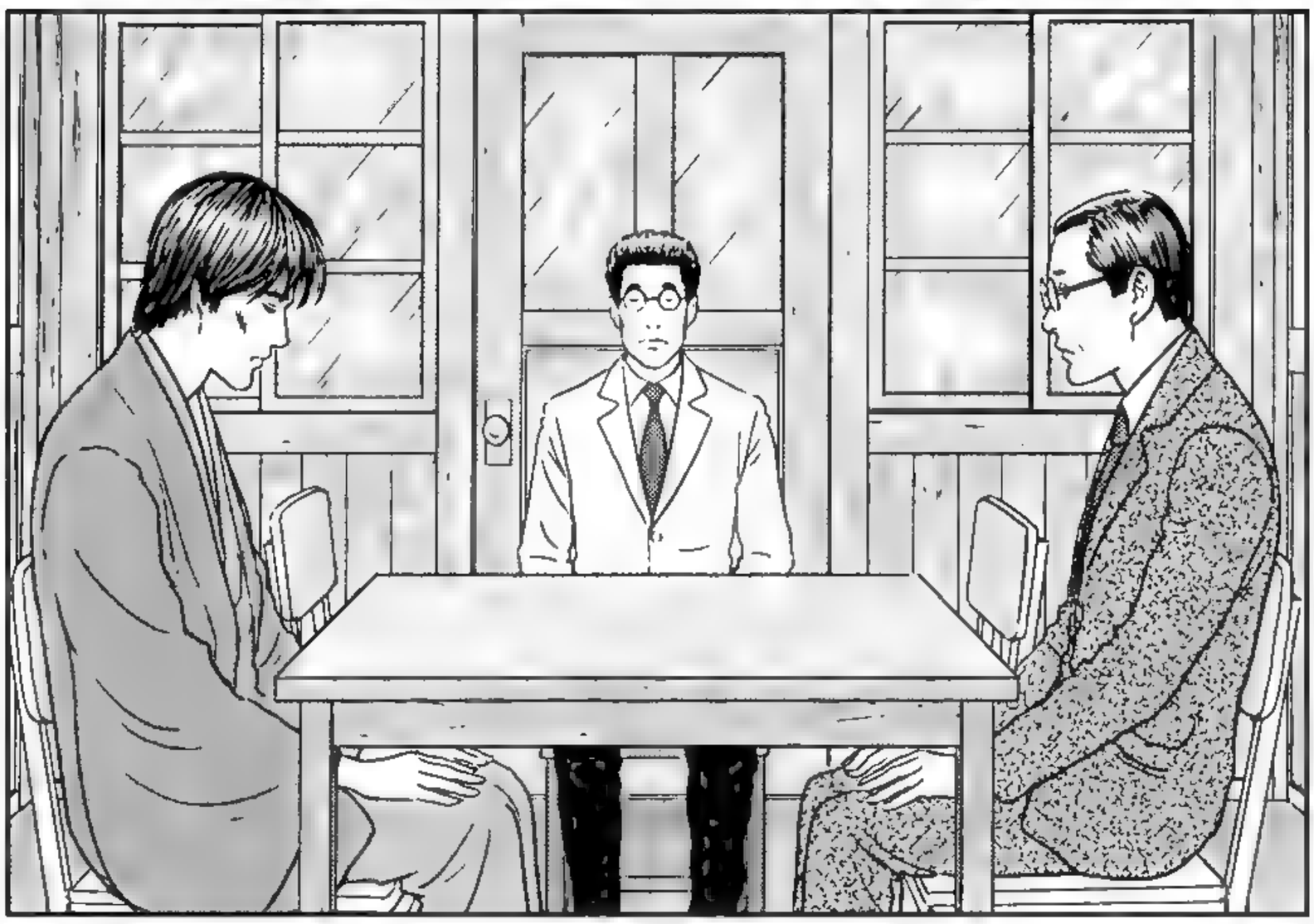
YES. I GAVE IT THAT TITLE SINCE I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MY POSTHUMOUS WORK.

OBA, YOU HAVE A VISITOR.

*Visiting Room







...FATHER PASSED AWAY AT LAST THE OTHER DAY.

AFTER QUITE A LONG TIME IN CRITICAL CONDITION...

BUT NOW THAT FATHER'S GONE AND I'M THE HEAD OF THE OBA HOUSE, I'VE DECIDED TO CHANGE HOW WE HANDLE YOU.

YOU WERE AS GOOD AS DISINHERITED, SO WE HAVEN'T OFFERED YOU ANY SUPPORT.

WE COULDN'T DELAY THE FUNERAL, SO I'M INFORMING YOU NOW.

THE ONLY THING I ASK IS THAT YOU LEAVE TOKYO IMMEDIATELY AND BEGIN YOUR CONVALESCENCE AFRESH IN THE COUNTRY.

ONCE YOU'RE RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL HERE, YOU'LL HAVE NO WORRIES AS FAR AS YOUR LIVING EXPENSES ARE CONCERNED.

...YOUR MISCONDUCT DROVE YOUR WIFE MAD, EVENTUALLY LEADING TO HER SUICIDE...

ON TOP OF THE COMMOTION AFTER YOU FAILED TO COMMIT SUICIDE...

...AND THEN YOUR PARTNER IN THAT MISCONDUCT ALSO ENDED UP DYING TRAGICALLY.

I HEARD ALL ABOUT YOUR VARIOUS MESSES IN TOKYO FROM FLATFISH— I MEAN, SHIBUTA.

CAFE HOLLYWOOD

THAT GINZA WAITRESS YOU LET DIE IN THE LOVERS' SUICIDE WAS JUST THE BEGINNING...

I KNOW YOU UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE ALL KINDS OF ATTACHMENTS, BUT GO OUT TO THE COUNTRY. THAT'S THE CONDITION FOR MY ASSISTANCE.

YOU NEED NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR VARIOUS COMMITMENTS IN TOKYO. SHIBUTA WILL TAKE CARE OF THAT.

But when the moment came, I was indeed shaken.

I thought I'd prepared myself for this.

I felt as though the vessel of my suffering had become empty.

That familiar, frightening presence was gone.

My father was dead.

...and told him everything that had happened in the visiting room.

津島修治

...I went to Dazai's room...

After my brother left...

KACHA

I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL SO WELL I CAN ALMOST TASTE IT.

I ALSO LOST MY FATHER WHEN I WAS 14.

CON-
GRATU-
LATIONS.

YOU'RE
FREE NOW.

...but tears streamed unceasingly down my cheeks.

I don't know why...

CHAIN No. 23: Comedy

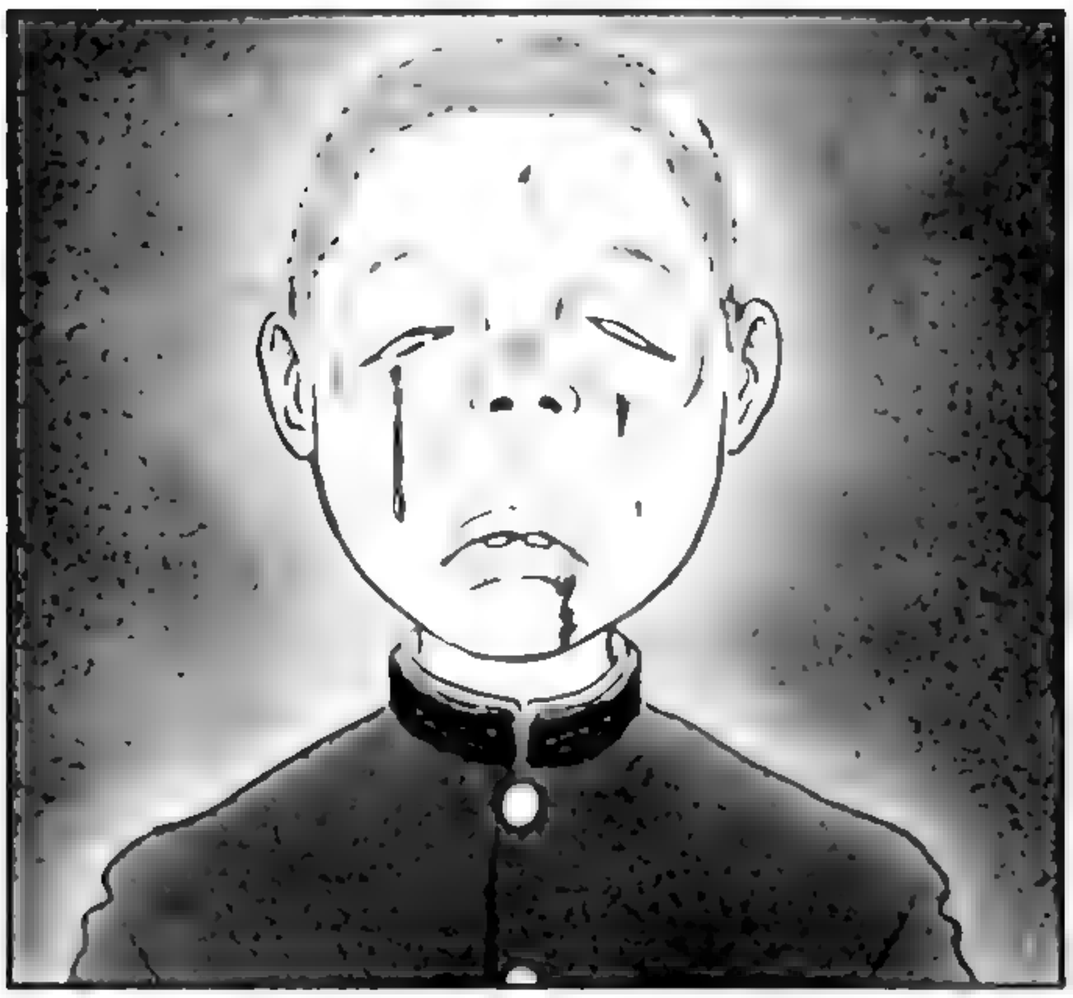
...the weight of the crimes I'd committed.

All that was left was...

...and it seemed that nothing could interest me now.

The weight in my vessel of suffering was gone...

The news of my father's death eviscerated me.



WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOZO OBA?

PLEASE FORGIVE ME...

FORGIVE ME...

FEELING BLUE AGAIN?

R-RIGHT...

NO, I'M ALL RIGHT.

YOUR FATHER'S DEATH IS UNFORTUNATE, BUT YOU'RE FREE NOW.

CHEER UP.

READ IT. IT'LL GIVE YOU A LAUGH, CLEAR YOUR MIND.

OH... SORRY, NOT YET.

HAVE YOU READ MY BOOK YET?

YOU VERY MUCH DON'T LOOK IT.

I'LL DO THAT.

RIGHT.

KA CHAK

I'M COMING IN.

SLAM

TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF IT WHEN YOU'RE DONE.

DID IT CLEAR YOUR MIND?

I LOST TRACK OF TIME.

IT'S HONESTLY BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I IMMERSED MYSELF IN A NOVEL LIKE THAT.

THIS IS THE STRANGE COINCIDENCE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT BEFORE THEN, *HM?*

ON TOP OF THAT, THERE'S EVEN A CHARACTER WITH MY NAME.

HM? JIN

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE IT ALL HAPPENED TO SOMEONE ELSE.

NO... IT REALLY GOT TO ME, ACTUALLY.

*Table of Contents: Flowers of Buffoonery, Monkey Face, Against the Current, Not the Same as He Was, Romanesque

THAT VIEW OF THINGS MAKES LIGHT OF HUMAN CREATIVITY PERHAPS.

WHAT? *HM*, WHO'S TO SAY?

IT'S MOSTLY FICTION.

I FEEL A PECULIAR CONNEC-TION WITH IT.

BY THE WAY, SEVERAL OF THE STORIES IN THIS COLLECTION...

...ARE YOUR OWN EXPERI-ENCES, YES?

YOU'RE RATHER EASILY CARRIED AWAY, TOO.

DAZAI.

I SEE.

...IT'S HARD TO KEEP ACTING OUT OUR COMEDY.

FOR BOTH OF US...

DAZAI, I CONFESS. ALL OF MY DELIRIOUS RAMBLINGS IN THE CORRIDOR THAT NIGHT WERE TRUE.

MY LIFE AND YOURS HAVE BEEN THE SAME.

WHY?

WHAT?

BUT, WELL, YOU'RE STILL BETTER OFF THAN I.

...

MORE THAN THE PAIN I FEEL AT THE CRIME OF HAVING BEEN THE CAUSE OF THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF SO MANY...

...THE MOST DIFFICULT THING HAS BEEN THE FACT THAT MY WIFE WAS TAKEN BY ANOTHER MAN... I CAN'T TALK TO ANYONE BUT YOU ABOUT THAT.

YOUR WIFE'S NEVER HAD A LOVER, I SUPPOSE?

THAT'S HAPPI-NESS RIGHT THERE.

...YOU'LL BECOME A GREAT WRITER AND GO DOWN IN HISTORY.

I'M CERTAIN...

AT ANY RATE, DAZAI...

I WAS OVER-WHELMED BY THIS BOOK.

IF YOU ONLY HAD THIS ONE ELEMENT, YOU COULD WRITE EVEN GREATER BOOKS.

BUT THERE'S JUST ONE THING YOU'RE LACKING.

THANK YOU.

OH...

PFFT

PLEASE SPARE ME THAT AT LEAST!

NO...

AND WHAT'S THAT?

A LOVER FOR YOUR WIFE...

I had a strange feeling.

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA!

Up until that point in my life, this sort of conversation...

...I'd definitely had nothing like it even in my association with that Horiki.

As was Dazai...

Before I knew it, I was crying.

And laughing like this from the bottom of my heart.

It was truly the first time in my life.

I felt as though I could live a quiet life.

...that I felt it gradually start to take on a mysterious power for me, like a tranquilizer.

The book struck such a deep chord within me!!!

I read Dazai's first collection over and over, any number of times.

SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING I COULD USE IN A NOVEL, DOESN'T IT?

HM?

THE COSMOS OF ITABASHI MENTAL HOSPITAL ...

YES.

!

WHAT?

I OFTEN SEE THAT BOY IN THE GARDEN.

SO IT'S NOT A HALLUCI-NATION...

NO...

OF COURSE. ARE YOU SAYING HE'S A GHOST OR SOME SUCH?

DAZAI, YOU CAN SEE HIM?

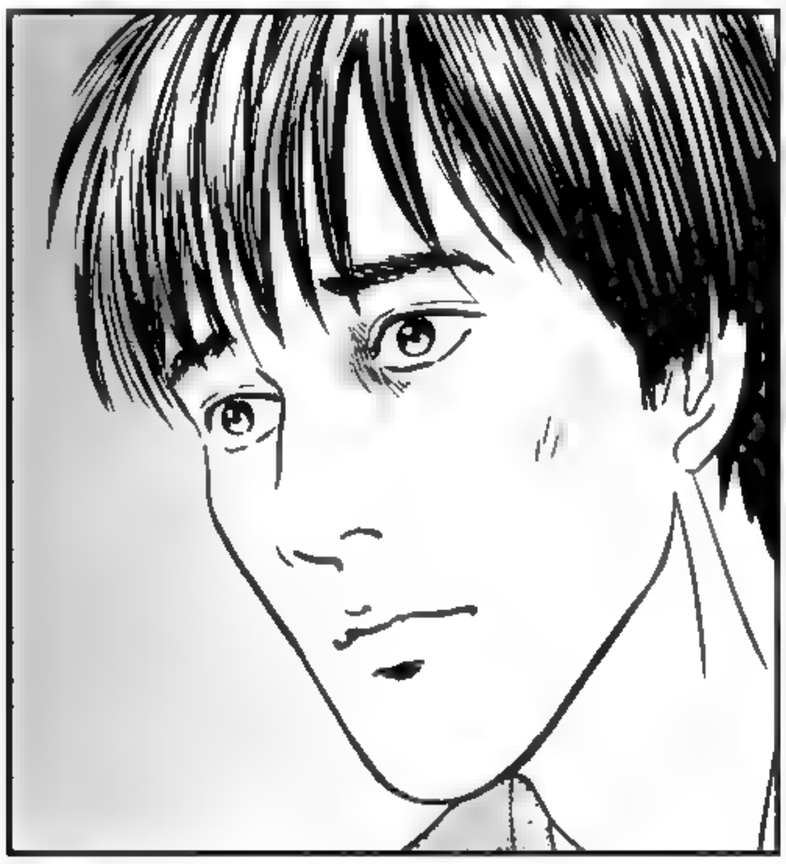
THAT WOMAN HAS BEEN LOOKING OVER HERE THIS WHOLE TIME.

ANYWAY, TAKE A LOOK OVER THERE. THAT WINDOW IN THE WING OPPOSITE.

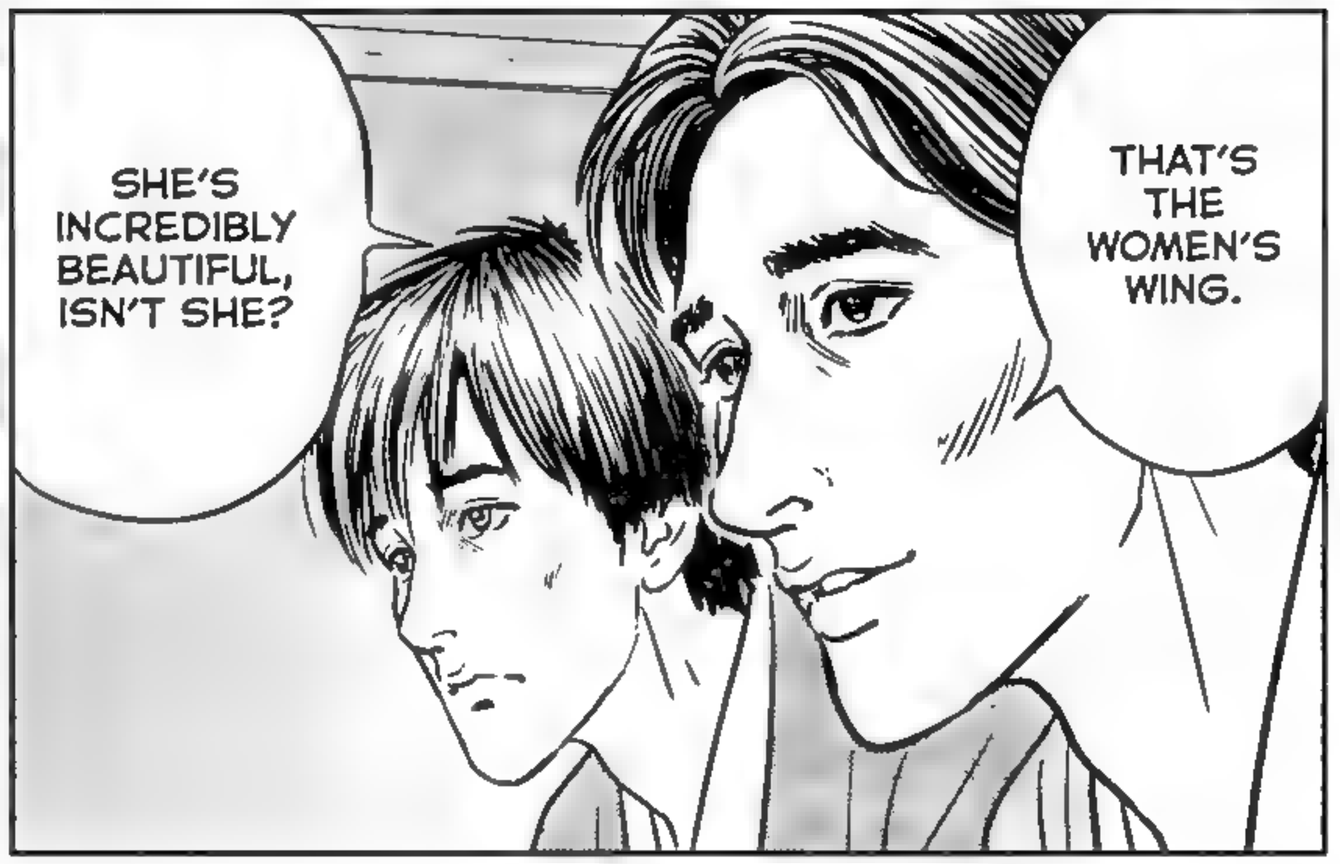
IF IT'S NOT A VISION, THEN...

WHAT?

HEY, OBA, WHAT ARE YOU MUTTERING ABOUT?



SHE'S INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T SHE?



THAT'S THE WOMEN'S WING.

NO IDEA ...

OBA, WHO DO YOU THINK SHE'S LOOKING AT, ME OR YOU?

DADDY.

DADDY ?

THAT MIGHT BE MY CHILD...

...

THE CHILD YOUR COUSIN GAVE BIRTH TO?

OH!

YOU CAN'T BE...

THD

I THINK THERE'S NO MISTAKE.

SO THEN THAT WOMAN...

YES...

I NEVER IMAGINED THAT I WOULD MEET THEM IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

I ESSENTIALLY FLED TO TOKYO IMMEDIATELY AFTER SHE HAD THE BABY...

...SO I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AFTER THAT.

I USED TO CALL HER SET-CHAN.

SETSU-KO SUZU-MURA ...

THE TRUTH IS...HE'S THE SPITTING IMAGE OF THAT CLASSMATE WHO DESPISED ME AND COMMITTED SUICIDE.

THE BOY... HE DOESN'T LOOK AT ALL LIKE YOU.

ARE YOU SURE THERE'S NO MISTAKE?

THAT'S WHAT'S SO DIS-TURBING.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE TAKEICHI'S.

NO, TAKEICHI COMMITTED SUICIDE OVER A YEAR BEFORE THE CHILD WAS BORN.

EVEN BACK THEN, THERE WAS ANOTHER MAN.

SO THEN WOULDN'T IT BE TAKEICHI'S CHILD?

ON PURPOSE...

ON PURPOSE...

TAKEICHI WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO SEE THROUGH TO MY TRUE NATURE.

AFTER HE DIED, HE WAS REBORN AS MY CHILD TO MAKE ME SUFFER!

HE WAS A FEARSOME PRESENCE.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN BEING REBORN AND THAT SORT OF THING.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF CHILDREN IN THIS WORLD WHO DON'T RESEMBLE THEIR PARENTS, THOUGH.

BUT IF YOU'RE CERTAIN THAT'S YOUR CHILD, THEN I SUPPOSE THAT'S THAT.

PERHAPS IT'S SIMPLY YOUR GUILTY CONSCIENCE THAT MAKES YOU FEEL HE RESEMBLES TAKEICHI?

...

IF YOU LOOK MORE CLOSELY, PERHAPS HE'S A LOVELY CHILD.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

HEY, BOY.

...

YOICHI.

...

YOICHI...

...

YOUR BROTHER WILL BE COMING FOR YOU THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

MR. OBA.

YOU'RE BEING DIS-CHARGED.

THE ILLNESS IN YOUR LUNGS HAS ALSO SETTLED DOWN.

YOUR WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS ARE COMPLETELY GONE. YOU'RE IN GOOD CONDITION.

AT ANY RATE, CONGRATULA-TIONS.

WELL, I'LL BE DISCHARGED SOON ENOUGH MYSELF.

SO YOU'VE GONE ON AHEAD OF ME, OBA.

IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH I'VE BEEN REBORN.

YOU SAVED ME.

I'M THE ONE WHO'S BEEN SAVED HERE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I CAN TELL YOU THIS NOW...

DAZAI... THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING THIS LAST MONTH.

I'VE DECIDED ON A TITLE.

NO LONGER HUMAN.

OBA, DO YOU MIND IF I TURN YOUR LIFE INTO A NOVEL?

MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...

WHAT?

RIDICULOUS! YOURS IS MORE TRAGIC.

IT GOES BEYOND TRAGIC AND INTO THE SUPER-NATURAL.

WELL, I DON'T THINK IT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM YOUR LIFE, THOUGH.

HEH! THAT'S A GOOD TITLE.

I PROMISE I WILL!

WHEN THE BOOK COMES OUT, PLEASE SEND ME A SIGNED COPY.

HA HA HA!

MAYBE *NO LONGER HUMAN* WILL BECOME YOUR MASTER-PIECE.

IT'S AN UNUSUALLY WARM PLACE.

YOZO, FROM NOW ON, YOU'LL BE LIVING AT A HOT SPRING ALONG THE COAST IN TOHOKU.

WELL THEN, LET'S BE OFF.

YOU DO, *HM?*

ONCE I AM FULLY CONVALESCED AND WELL AGAIN, I INTEND TO MAKE MY OWN WAY.

BROTHER, MR. SHIBUTA. THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

WHAT? TWO MORE PEOPLE?

I WANT TO BRING TWO MORE PEOPLE ALONG.

IN ADDITION TO MYSELF...

BROTHER, I HAVE JUST ONE FINAL FAVOR TO ASK.

HM?

YOU KNOW THE SUZUMURAS, YES?

I HAD A CHILD WITH THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, SETCHAN.

I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING IT A SECRET UNTIL NOW.

YOU KNOW, THOSE DISTANT RELATIVES I LODGED WITH IN MY SCHOOL DAYS?

...I HAVE A FAMILY.

THE TRUTH IS...

WHAT?!

I'M IN YOUR DEBT, BROTHER.

BRING THEM OUT.

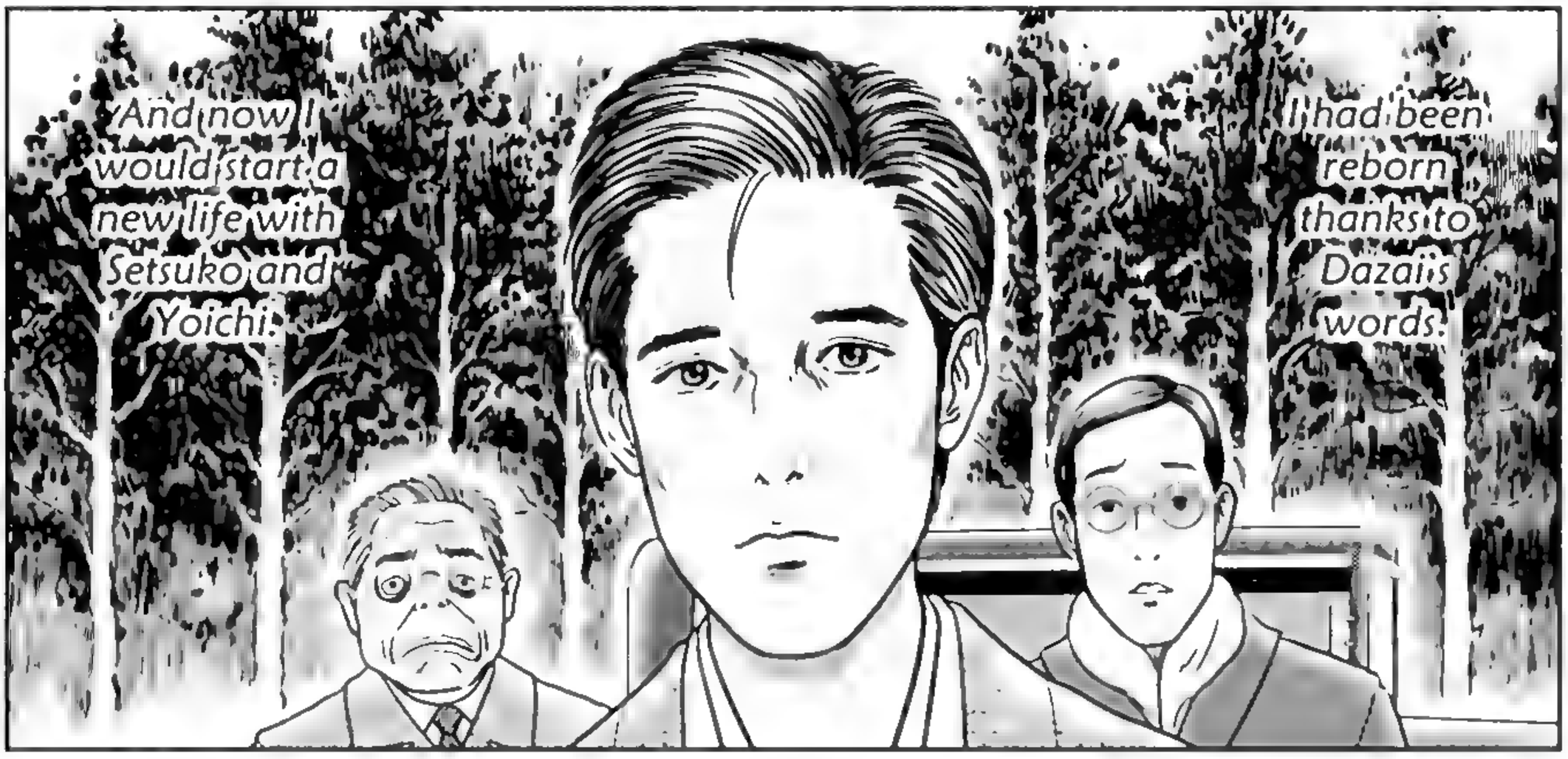
I SEE. FINE. WE'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW WITH AN EXTRA TWO.

YOZO, JUST HOW FAR WILL YOU GO...

...

SETSUKO! YOICHI!

COME OUT!


And now I would start a new life with Setsuko and Yoichi.
I had been reborn thanks to Dazai's words.

C58 306

CHAIN No. 24: Everything Passes

JUNE 9, 1948

TOHOKU

THIS IS QUITE A REMOTE AREA, MR. DAZAI.

VRRRR

THIS PLACE IS NOT GOOD FOR YOUR CONDITION.

IT'S ONLY, COMING THIS FAR, I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOUR HEALTH.

BUT OF COURSE, I WILL GO ANYWHERE SO LONG AS IT IS WITH YOU.

THERE ARE NICE PLACES FOR HOT SPRING TREATMENTS THAT ARE MUCH CLOSER.

A FRIEND?

...I HAVE A DEAR FRIEND HERE, SACHI.

AND YET YOU WOULD COME ALL THIS WAY TO SEE ONE PERSON. HE MUST BE IMPORTANT TO YOU...

YOU HAVE SO MANY VISITORS COMING TO THE STUDIO IN MITAKA WANTING TO TALK WITH YOU.

I KNOW I'LL GET MY STRENGTH BACK WHEN I SEE HIM.

YES... I ONLY MET HIM ONCE FOR A TIME 12 YEARS AGO, BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET HIM.

READERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARE HOLDING THEIR BREATH IN ANTICIPATION OF THE NEXT CHAPTER.

THE EDITOR IN CHIEF NOTED THAT YOUR NEW WORK IN THIS MONTH'S *TENBO* IS THE PEAK OF DAZAI LITERATURE.

YOU'RE CURRENTLY THE MOST IMPORTANT WRITER IN JAPAN.

IS THERE REALLY A HOUSE WAY OUT HERE?

VRRR

DASH

AH!

IT SHOULD BE UP AHEAD...

YES. I GOT A LETTER ONCE, WITH A MAP.

KOFF!

MR. DAZAI!

YOU MUSTN'T RUN!

HOW IS THIS ALL RIGHT?

I-I'M ALL RIGHT.

SEE? I *TOLD* YOU.

KOFF! KOFF!

SEE?

OH!

I JUST GOT EXCITED ...

SORRY, SACHI.

HERE IT IS.

SACHI, WAIT OUTSIDE A MINUTE, WOULD YOU?

...

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS IT?

IT'S QUITE AN ANCIENT HOUSE.

...

EXCUSE ME!

KLAK

KLIEK

KREEEE

...

AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE?

...

ER.

IS THIS THE HOME OF YOZO OBA?

OSAMU DAZAI?

MISTER ....

ACTUALLY, IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF I SAID DAZAI.

MY NAME IS TSUSHIMA.

IS HE WELL?

I'M A WRITER FROM TOKYO. I'VE COME TO SEE YOZO OBA.

Y-YES!

...THE MASTER IS IN.

NOW... PLEASE... THIS WAY.

HE'S SAID THAT IT WAS GOD'S WORK THAT HE MET YOU.

THAT YOU GAVE HIM THE COURAGE TO LIVE.

...YOU SAVED HIM.

HE'S ALWAYS SAYING...

MR. DAZAI... I'VE HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOU FROM THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE.

THAT MEETING WITH OBA 12 YEARS AGO HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF STRENGTH FOR ME.

IT'S JUST THE SAME FOR ME!

GO AHEAD.

HE'S RIGHT IN HERE.

OBA...

...

IT'S BEEN SO LONG!!

OBA... IT'S ME, DAZAI...

...

...

THE FIRST CHAPTER'S IN THIS MAGAZINE. PLEASE TAKE IT.

NO LONGER HUMAN!!

I FINISHED WRITING IT LAST MONTH.

...OBA, DO YOU REMEMBER MY PROMISE?

*Tenbo, June issue

...

OBA!

NOW, PLEASE TAKE IT!

JUST AS YOU PRE-DICTED ...

...THIS MIGHT BE MY MASTERWORK.

*No Longer Human Chapter 1, Dazai, Preface

I WANTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU AGAIN. I WANT TO REGAIN THE HOPE WE HAD THEN... THAT'S WHY I'VE COME TODAY!!

OBA... TWELVE YEARS AGO, IN THAT HOSPITAL, WE GAVE EACH OTHER HOPE!!

BUT SINCE THEN, SO MANY THINGS HAVE HAPPENED, AND NOW I'M AT A DEAD END.

WHAT ON EARTH'S HAPPENED TO HIM?

OBA...

...

OBA...

KRRRR KRRRR

KLATTER

AAH... THE MASTER...

OH! IT SEEMS THE LADY OF THE HOUSE HAS RETURNED.

YOZO...

...THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN STANDING OUTSIDE.

RIGHT NOW...

WHO IS SHE?!

HOW DARE YOU!!

WHAP

WHAP

YOU! YOU HAVE ME HERE, AND YET ANOTHER WOMAN AGAIN!

OH! MA'AM!

YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IDEA.

THAT'S MY COMPANION.

M-MA'AM! YOU'RE WRONG!!

ARE YOU SLEEPING WITH HER LIKE YOU SLEPT WITH MY SISTER?!

CONFESS!! ARE YOU SLEEPING TOGETHER?! ARE YOU SLEEPING WITH THAT WOMAN?!

HAVE MERCY...

MISS SETSUKO... PLEASE HAVE MERCY.

NAMU AMIDA BU...

PLEASE. PLEASE ...

ON PURPOSE...

ON PURPOSE...

ON PURPOSE ...

DAD.

YOUR WHOLE LIFE...

...FROM START TO FINISH, IS A FRAUD!!

YOU'RE A CHEAT, YOUR COWARDLY HEART DRESSED UP LIKE A CLOWN.

YOZO, I KNOW YOUR TRUE NATURE.

MR. DAZAI... YOU SHOULD LEAVE...

WHY WERE YOU EVEN BORN?!

WHY WERE YOU BORN?!

IT'S TOO LATE.

IT WAS JUST TOO MUCH FOR THE MASTER TO LIVE WITH THAT MOTHER AND SON.

QUICKLY NOW.

B-BUT I CAN'T LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS...

WERE YOU ABLE TO SEE YOUR FRIEND?

MR. DAZAI... WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YES...

OH...

REALLY ?

...

...TO SUFFER ANY MORE THAN I ALREADY HAVE...

I DON'T WANT...

WHO WAS THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN WHO WENT INTO THE HOUSE EARLIER?

I'M SORRY, SACHI.

YES.

SHE GLARED QUITE SERIOUSLY AT ME. ALMOST AS THOUGH I WERE HER RIVAL IN LOVE...

LET'S GO HOME...

TO TOKYO.

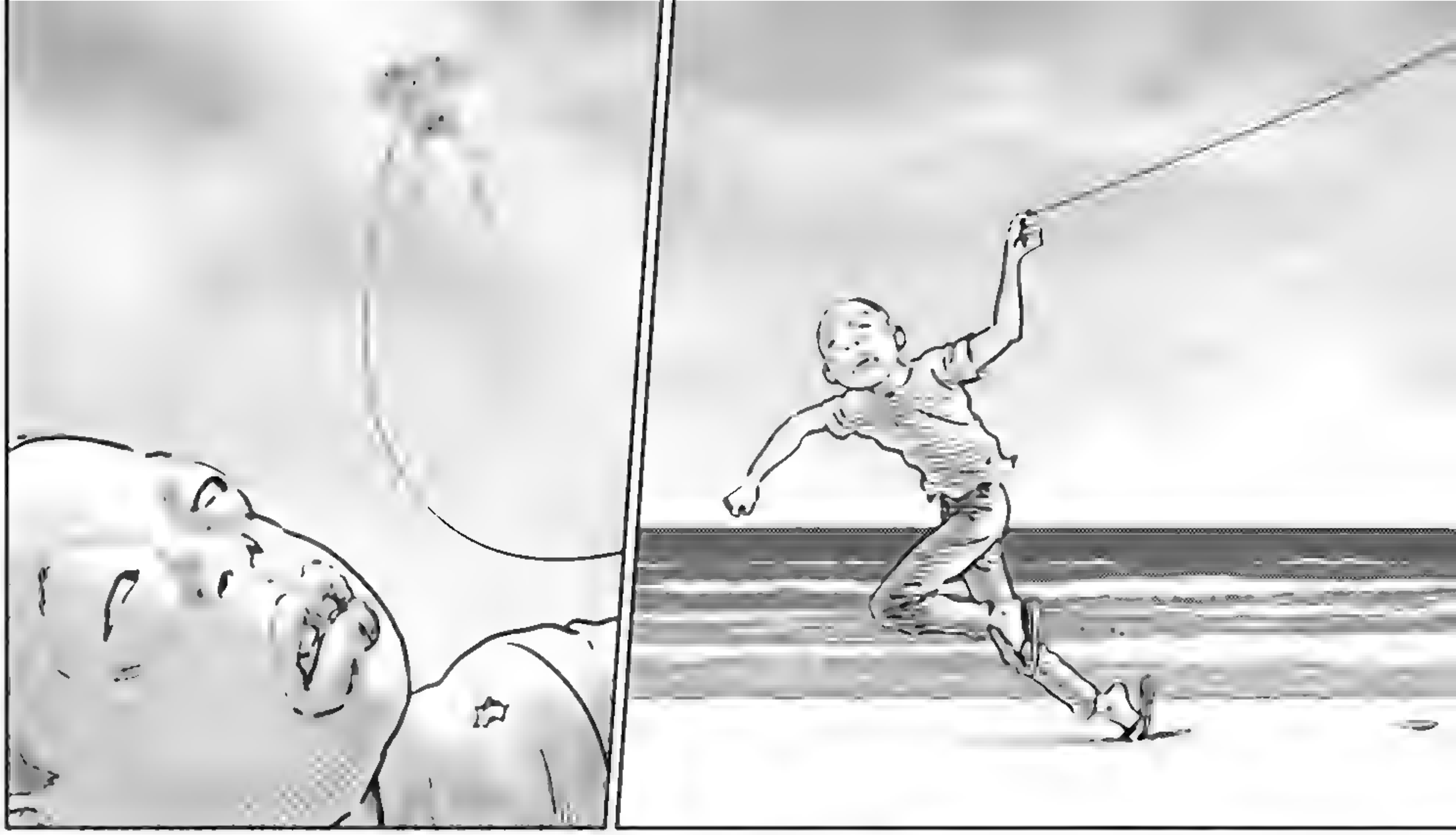
APOLO-
GIZE...

APOLO-
GIZE
TO ME.

NOW.

AAAH!!

AH!



Osamu Dazai: Double Suicide
Drowning in the Tamagawa
River with a war widow

*Yozo lion mask

Everything passes.

Now I have neither happiness nor unhappiness.

No Longer Human/**END**

PG. 195 TRANSLATION

TOKYO DAILY MORNING NEWSPAPER (SUNDAY)

Assemblyman Oba's brother* attempts a lovers' suicide

(via phone from Kamakura) The younger brother in the wealthy family of Assemblyman Oba in Kanaki-cho, Kita Tsugaru County, Aomori Prefecture, resident at Senyukan in Tokyo's Hongo district, Yozo (21), planned to commit suicide with a woman on the coast at Koshigoe at approximately 5:00 p.m. on the 29th. (Photo: Mr. Yozo Oba)

Woman dead, Oba in critical condition

Yesterday morning around 8:00 a.m., a local fisherman discovered Oba in anguish. He was taken to Shichirigahama's Aomatsu Clinic and received care. He was in critical condition, but is expected to survive. According to the Kamakura Police investigation, the woman was Tsuneko Abe (23), a hostess at Cafe Hollywood at the back of Jujiya Music Shop in Ginza.

Woman was Ginza hostess Tsuneko Abe

Eloped to Tokyo from Hiroshima

Common-law husband currently in prison

As a result of infidelity with husband's absence as a pretext, double lovers' suicide

The woman's whereabouts were at first unknown, but a week after the incident, her corpse was discovered washed up onto shore. (Photo: Tsuneko Abe)

Dumbfounded Hiroshima relatives confront the body

The woman's common-law husband is currently serving time for fraud. The Abe family from Hiroshima faced the body in shock and confirmed it was indeed Tsuneko. Both the man and woman in this case took the sedative Calmotin and planned to commit suicide together, but the reason and other factors are still not clear.

Express from the Oba house

The Oba family was surprised at the telegram, and a member of the family rushed to Kamakura on a train departing at 1:00 p.m. According to Assemblyman Oba, "We received notice that Yozo had disappeared, and we were concerned that something might have happened to him, but we never dreamed that he would do a thing like this. This is truly troubling, even if we don't know the true cause."

[AD] Mouth freshener and disinfectant

Oral hygiene Nioou

Before going out/After meals

***Editorial Note:** By this time in the story, Yozo's brother had succeeded to their father's seat in the Diet.

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NO LONGER HUMAN

Story & Art by Junji Ito
Original Novel by Osamu Dazai

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by Junji ITO
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